

Annual Report of the Committee on Academic Priorities for 2007-2008
August 25, 2008

The Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) made considerable progress on a wide range of items emanating from the strategic plan, *The Smith Design for Learning*, and the NEASC reaccreditation. While CAP continued its work on priority items in the academic program, CAP assisted the President and Provost in their work in identifying the final areas of faculty reductions. All of these activities are consistent with the mandate CAP has had since 1998: to provide both systematic and institution-wide curricular planning, to engage in the periodic review of departments and programs, and to review proposals for tenure-track and long-term faculty positions. In addition, the Committee has the responsibility to consider curricular initiatives, either the Committee's or those submitted by faculty and student groups.

I. Joint Sessions

CAP communicated closely with the **Student Curriculum Committee (SCC)** throughout the year. The chair of this group met regularly with the chair of CAP, and the full SCC met with CAP twice during regular sessions: in December 2007, to present their proposal for a quantitative requirement and their proposal to improve race relations on campus; and in March 2008, to further develop plans that would introduce more discussions on diversity into the curriculum (details on this work appear in the Academic Program section). CAP also worked with SCC to offer two open forums for students, both held in March: one on the College budget and finances; the other on the faculty reduction process. Finally, members of SCC served on the planning committee for "Celebrating Collaborations" and "Smith Elects the World."

CAP held two joint meeting with the **Committee on Mission and Priorities (CMP)**. In October, CAP and CMP discussed the development of the international, environmental and community engagement centers as well as the resource allocation appropriate for each of the anticipated centers. CAP and CMP members also reviewed the budget surplus and the use of the surplus to alleviate the impact of the faculty reduction process. In May, CAP and CMP reviewed center development and plans for the capital campaign.

II. Year in Review

CAP's priorities for the year were set in the fall retreat by the elected faculty members of the CAP in consultation with the Provost. As in the previous year, an elected member of CAP served as the direct link to the Provost in setting the priority items for the year and the agenda for each meeting. Alice Hearst served ably in this role throughout 2007-08. Attached in Appendix A is the list of priority issues and the schedule of discussions.

The Capacities

Following the successful visit of the NEASC external team, CAP turned its attention to the implementation of *The Smith Design* and the mechanisms for ensuring that departments and programs identified points within the major where students would find

these capacities addressed. CAP invited all departments and programs to organize retreats focused on the shape of the major in light of *The Smith Design for Learning*. CAP requested reports on the retreats and will review them in the fall of 2008 to track progress on *The Smith Design* [See Appendix B for the questions CAP asked each department and program to address]. As of August 15, 2008, 35 departments had completed their retreats and filed their reports; we await the reports of 9 departments and 7 departments/programs have retreats scheduled for the late summer and early fall. In addition to the individual departmental/program retreats, several interdisciplinary and multi department retreats took place, including one in the Life Sciences, and one for the departments of Computer Science, Physics, Engineering and Mathematics. These reports will be available on the Provost's website in September and discussed at a fall meeting of Chairs and Directors.

Writing Across the Curriculum

In close coordination with the Jacobson Center, CAP continues to review progress on the improvement of student writing. In June of 2007 the Writing Committee (a subcommittee of CAP), under the leadership of Doreen Weinberger and Julio Alves, undertook an evaluation of a sample of student writing portfolios. The results of that review were presented to the CAP. The full report is attached as Appendix C. As a result of that report, an additional course, ENG 119, will be offered this spring to address the writing needs of those students identified in first semester Writing intensive (WI) courses who need more focused attention on their writing skills. CAP will continue to urge departments to develop and identify a second-level WI course **within the major**; this was one of the issues the Committee asked all departments to address in their retreats.

Quantitative Skills

CAP 2006-07 and 2007-08 favored the development of a quantitative skills requirement to parallel our writing requirement. The Committee felt it was important to signal to our students the critical nature of quantitative literacy as a key component in a liberal arts education. While the vast majority of Smith students currently take courses that develop quantitative skills, CAP has concluded that it is important to signal the centrality of such skills through a requirement and through a more explicit expansion of the number of courses utilizing these skills throughout the curriculum, particularly in the social sciences and humanities.

CAP spent considerable effort reviewing data on student completion of courses in the areas of Mathematics and Quantitative skills. Prior to moving toward a requirement, CAP wanted to be assured that we had an adequate number of courses to accommodate all students. Working with the Quantitative Advisory Committee to identify those courses, which would meet a clear definition of quantitative literacy, the Office of Institutional Research conducted a review of course-taking patterns by the class of 2006. That review indicated that only 49 members of the 2006 graduating class had failed to take such a course. This is heartening news, indicating that there are certainly an adequate number of courses available to accommodate all

our students. CAP 2008-09 will need to begin the year with a decision about bringing the discussion of a requirement to the faculty for consideration.

Diversity

A series of incidents in student life in the fall of 2007 led the Student Curriculum Committee to bring to CAP a series of proposals for enhancing the discussion of diversity in the Smith curriculum. The SCC asked that CAP require a course on racism for all entering students. The SSC also hoped for better curricular roadmaps to direct students to courses throughout the curriculum in which the topics of diversity, race and ethnicity are examined in greater depth. The Chair of the SSC and the President of Student Government reported on their proposals to the faculty at the April, 2008 faculty meeting. CAP took two actions in response to these requests. First, it organized a faculty summer seminar, led by Naomi Miller, Director of the Office of Institutional Diversity, and Danielle Ramdath, Associate Dean of the Faculty, on developing courses to address diversity issues. Twelve members of the faculty participated in the seminar in June of 2008. Second, CAP approved a new IDP course, "Thinking Through Race," which will be taught in the fall of 2008 and offered on a S/U basis (2credit). The course will be directed by Tom Riddell for the next two years and reviewed by CAP in its second year.

First-Year Seminars

One of the goals of *The Smith Design* was to offer a sufficient number of First Year Seminars so that each entering student could avail herself of a college-level seminar with other first-year students during the critical transition to college-level work. Evidence from focus groups with first-year students supported the success of these offerings; especially in the opportunities they provided first-year students to practice critical thinking skills and oral presentations. We expected to reach our target number of seminars by the fall of 2010. CAP is pleased to report that the target number will be offered in 2008. Given the rapid expansion of the program and its importance in launching first-year students successfully, we are very pleased that Susan Etheredge, Associate Professor of Education and Child Study, has agreed to serve as the Director of our First Year Seminar program for the next three years. In addition, with the move to provide a First Year Seminar (FYS) for all entering first-year students, the new director of the seminars will make the acquisition of appropriate writing and quantitative skills a focus of the first-year experience.

Presidential Seminars

Another aspect of *The Smith Design* was a proposal for the creation of Presidential Seminars. These are intended to be interdisciplinary seminars open to juniors and seniors to allow them to do advanced work outside the major but in a field related to it. We hope the seminars will lead toward greater coherence in the work Smith students do outside the major, (one of the curricular goals of *The Smith Design*) as well as ensure that upper class women have options to explore a new field at an advanced level appropriate to their class standing. Ten proposals for Presidential seminars were submitted and, after CAP review and conversations with the proposers, six were approved. There will be five presidential seminars offered in 2008-09 (one has been delayed until 2009-10), representing work in

the Sciences and the Humanities. The list of courses is found in Appendix D. In conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research, we will assess the Presidential Seminars each year to see if they accomplish the goals we have set for them.

Bachelor of Science

The Geology department proposed a reorganization of the major that included an option to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology. The purpose of this Bachelor of Science “pathway” was to better position students who intend to pursue graduate degrees in Geology. The Policy subcommittee, as well as the full CAP, discussed the proposal at length and concluded that this was an issue that would potentially be of interest to all the science departments. The Committee decided that a decision on the Geology proposal should be made after we had had a fuller consultation with other science departments who wish to offer the B.S. Thus, CAP will ask Science Planning, as well as the chairs of science departments, to discuss the issue this fall and offer us a recommendation concerning more extensive offering of the B.S. degree as well as the standards surrounding the awarding of the B.S.

Grade Inflation

CAP decided to raise the question of grade inflation with chairs and directors, proposing that the faculty consider the recent efforts at Princeton to address the problem. Jeff Hunter prepared a report for the April, 2008 meeting of chairs and directors (attached as Appendix E). CAP has asked the Provost to discuss grade inflation with the Mellon 8 and Mellon 23 deans to see if there is support among comparable liberal arts colleges to take on this issue collectively. The Committee has also asked the Provost to have the registrar provide the chairs of departments and programs with course-by-course and instructor breakdowns of the distributions of grades as an aid to discussions with members of the faculty in their departments.

Improving Teaching College-wide

The Provost’s office sponsored a pilot program of mid-semester evaluations for interested faculty members. Developed by Jacobson Center in collaboration with faculty, the project proved to be of great interest to the faculty with 26 participants. A preliminary evaluation of the pilot project suggested that it should be continued and assessed again at the end of 2009.

III. Subcommittee Actions

1. Subcommittee on Honors and Independent Programs (SHIP) Year End Report

SHIP regularly oversees the operation of the Departmental Honors Programs and approves and oversees independent individual majors. SHIP is also responsible for determining the number of students awarded Latin Honors at the end of the academic year.

SHIP made substantial revisions to the operation of the Departmental Honors Program during the 2007-2008 year. In an effort to allow departments and programs maximum flexibility for designating projects that should qualify for Departmental Honors, and to allow departments and programs to account for differing academic requirements in each major, SHIP has eliminated the College-wide GPA requirement in favor of department-specific standards. It has also changed the terminology from an honors *thesis* to an honors *project*, allowing departments and programs to recognize a broader range of work (art and music projects, for example) as fulfilling the Departmental Honors requirement. SHIP contemplates that this change may take a couple of years to work itself out. It has asked every department and program to create a flyer/pamphlet/web page describing its particular requirements, and to provide SHIP with a copy of that information. SHIP deferred a discussion of Honors projects that are interdisciplinary in nature until the 2008-2009 academic year. One Honors Director has asked for guidance about how to proceed in setting standards and evaluating such projects; SHIP wishes to take that discussion up with Directors more broadly.

SHIP has agreed to convene at least one lunch meeting yearly with the Directors of Honors for each department and program, in early October of each year. SHIP hopes that Directors will take that opportunity to exchange ideas about their departmental programs as well as to discuss changes they would like to see made at the College level. SHIP may convene a spring meeting as well, should Directors indicate that such a meeting would be helpful.

SHIP also resolved some issues concerning the Liberal Studies major required for students in Education and Child Study who are interested in acquiring state certification for elementary education. Students who do not have a major other than Education and Child Study must comply with a list of state requirements geared toward preparing such students for elementary teaching, and SHIP approved the template provided by the Education and Child Study Department listing those additional courses. Students in elementary education must demonstrate that they have fulfilled those requirements in order to be certified as Liberal Studies majors. That major may be acquired only in conjunction with an Education and Child Studies degree.

2. The Course Subcommittee

The Course subcommittee of CAP acted on numerous curricular changes, permanent courses, experimental courses, new topics, changes to majors and minors, and changes to credits/course levels.

In 2007-2008, CAP (and subsequently the faculty) approved 51 new permanent courses; 29 experimental courses; 12 new topics; 11 experimental topics; 6 experimental courses to permanent; 4 conversion to FYS; 6 credit changes; 11 course number changes; 12 enrollment changes; 6 changes to major requirements (ANT, FRN, GER, GEO, PHI, PHY); and 5 changes to minor requirements (ANT (2), EGR, GER, PHI).

IV. Academic Events for the Smith Community

Smith Elects the World

The second annual “Smith Elects the World” conference was held in the Campus Center on Tuesday, November 6, 2007. Sponsored by CAP and the Offices of the Dean of the College, Dean of the Faculty and Career Development, this conference provides students the opportunity to explore the relationship between their formal education in the classroom and their off-campus learning during their Praxis internships, community service experiences and study abroad. This event addresses CAP’s desire to have students reflect on their Junior Year Abroad experiences as well as to provide venues for students to strengthen their public speaking. This year’s event featured six concurrent student panels with 24 student participants and a total attendance of over 150. A faculty discussion followed with Professors Donald Siegel (Exercise and Sports Studies), Janie Vanpee (French Studies) and Elisabeth Armstrong (Study of Women and Gender) who reinforced ways that internships, service learning and study abroad connect with students’ academic courses of study.

Celebrating Collaborations

A project of CAP, *Celebrating Collaborations* is sponsored by the Offices of the President, Dean of the Faculty, Dean of the College and the Louise W. and Edmund J. Kahn Liberal Arts Institute. This event highlights the collaborative research exchanges between students and faculty members at Smith. Division I, division II and interdisciplinary representation doubled this year, producing a total of 164 presentations and 80 poster sessions. A record high of 254 students and 116 faculty members participated in this event with over 540 attendees.

Liberal Arts Luncheons

CAP sponsors the popular weekly lunch talk series *Liberal Arts Luncheons*, allowing the campus community to learn more about the specific research interests and work of faculty members. Doreen Weinberger organized the series for fall semester 2007, and Alice Hearst organized the series for spring 2008.

Faculty Leadership Seminar

Sponsored by the Provost’s Office and Faculty Council, the *Faculty Leadership Seminar* series provides opportunities for faculty members to discuss issues that are integral to the strategic planning process. This year’s series consisted of five seminars that focused on the college budget, teaching, academic support services, diversity, and financial aid.

V. Mapping the Curriculum

In March 2008 the Mellon Foundation awarded Smith a grant for “Mapping the Curriculum.” The grant provides temporary support for the expansion of the FYS program, allows us to launch the Presidential seminars, and will support our efforts to revise and improve advising. In addition, funds are available to support a variety of faculty endeavors to create “clusters,” linking courses from several departments around a

topic to provide greater coherence to the courses students elect outside their majors. The grants provides support for “mapping” projects both in the major and outside the major.

Proposals for the use of those funds were solicited in the spring, and a number of awards were made to members of the faculty to prepare presidential and first year seminars as well as to meet to consider the development of course clusters. Ten members of the faculty received support for student faculty research projects (in addition to the eight students supported for summer research through a previous Mellon 8 grant).

In addition, the review of departmental retreat reports has indicated a number of promising projects and proposals and the Provost’s office has invited proposals from those groups.

VI. Staffing Review

Beginning in 2003-04, CAP and the Provost have been charged with returning the faculty to its normal size of 285 FTE (including Engineering). Guided by the results of the curriculum review of 2004, annual reviews of enrollment patterns, and a consideration of retirements and resignations as potential opportunities for reductions, the Provost and CAP achieved 17 reductions by the fall of 2007. These included tenure track reductions in the following departments: Art, Biology, Economics, English, French, German, Government, History, History of Science, Italian, Music, Religion and Theatre.

Following a series of proposals from chairs and directors, the President and Provost asked ACRA to set aside a sinking fund from the accumulated budget surplus to allow the Provost to identify the eight reductions and support those remaining positions. The President and Provost identified a group of 16 positions for possible reductions for CAP consideration. CAP reviewed the proposed reductions with departments and programs identified by the President and Provost as well as with two additional departments. The final eight reductions recommended by CAP were in the following departments: Afro-American Studies, American Studies, Comparative Literature, Computer Science, Engineering, English, Music, Philosophy, and Russian.

CAP issued its recommendations on April 11, 2008. CAP’s report and the detailed description of the recommendations are found in Appendix F. Following the receipt of these recommendations, the President and Provost met with the departments identified by CAP and made the final decisions which were communicated to the faculty in a letter dated May 12, 2008 (included as Appendix G).

Once these final reductions had been identified, CAP turned its attention to recommendations for searches for tenure-track positions in 2008-09 for appointments to begin in the fall of 2009. Those recommendations are listed below, followed by the authorizations from the Provost:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEARCH REQUESTS 2008-09

23 June 2008

Failed searches that should go forward in 2008-09:

AAS

Afro-American Studies has asked to resume the search that failed in 2006-2007 for a social scientist of race in the twentieth century. CAP continues to recommend this position.

ART

Art's search for a full-time tenure-track appointment in Architecture failed in 2007-2008; the Department wishes to try again. CAP continues to recommend this position.

HST

History wishes to search for a tenure-track position in the European Middle Ages, after the definitive retirement of the tenure-track incumbent in spring 2004 and a failed search in 2004-2005. CAP continues to recommend this position.

PSY

After a failed search in 2007-2008, Psychology wishes to search again for a position covering neuroscience, neuroanatomy, and perception. CAP continues to recommend this position.

Previously authorized positions that should go forward in 2008-09:

ANT

This Five College shared position in Latin American Archaeology was authorized in 2007 but the search delayed until 2008-09. The position will be .5 and based at Smith. The position is based in Anthropology but is strongly supported by Latin American studies and courses will be cross listed in that program.

Requests for replacement positions that should go forward in 2008-09:

ART

The Art department requests to search for a tenure-track position in 19th/20th century art history to replace an unexpected resignation in spring 2008 at the Assistant Professor level. The person in this position teaches a set of core courses in art history/architecture taken by students majoring in all three tracks within the department (Art History, Studio Art, and Architecture), and also teaches a key methodological course in Art History. Art has the second highest number of majors in the college, with the Architecture track alone graduating 10-15 majors every year. Thus the person in this position plays a vital role in conducting honors and special studies projects with students, as well as advising. It would be a severe hardship to have this position go unfilled beyond the next academic year. CAP therefore recommends that a tenure-track search be conducted in 2008-2009.

BIO

Biology has renewed its request to fill the tenure-track position in plant systematics and plant ecology left open by the retirement of the department's sole botanist in 2006. This position meets curricular needs not only in the Biology Department, but in the Environmental Science and Policy Program and the Landscape Studies Program as well. The individual filling this position will be responsible for teaching three critical biology courses, one in biodiversity, a field which is essential as sustainability and climate change issues gain in importance. In addition, the field of plant ecology is one of the more quantitative fields of study in biology, and offerings will add to the Q courses in the College. The individual filling this position will also take over management of Smith's renowned herbarium and participate in making Smith's botanical facilities widely available for academic use. CAP believes that there is a critical need for this position. Although CAP recommended authorizing a search for this position in 2006-2007, and although the position has been 'bridged' since that time, the position has nonetheless been identified as one of the permanent reductions in the faculty. The Department is now willing to mortgage 0.5 FTE in anticipation of an

imminent retirement. CAP continues to recommend that this position be authorized for a search as soon as possible.

DAN

The Dance Department is seeking to reconvert an FTE position made up of a combination of adjunct guest lecturers since a retirement in 2004 into a full tenure-track FTE, bringing the permanent staff to three FTEs. Dance seeks to hire a scholar with a Ph.D. who specializes in the field of dance history, culture, and aesthetics in order to complement its other two permanent positions, which focus on technique, repertory, and composition. This person would also play a vital role in advising the graduate students in the program. In its recent review of graduate programs at Smith, CAP supported the continuation of the Dance Department's graduate program, which offers the only Master of Fine Arts in Dance (the terminal degree in the field) in New England. The Dance department routinely serves hundreds of undergraduates a year; some 800 students register for close to thirty dance technique and theory classes every year, while approximately 200 are involved in the six or so public dance productions that are also closely supervised by the faculty. This Dance position request has been supported in previous years by CAP and the Provost. We strongly endorse these previous recommendations and urge that this search go forward.

GER

To replace a retiring member, the German Department seeks a tenure-track assistant professor capable of contributing to the major as it has recently been redefined—that is, away from its historic focus on literature, and toward German Studies more broadly conceived, and toward synergies with other departments. German would like a new Ph.D. who, while teaching language and some literature, could also offer courses touching on such fields as cultural studies, politics, environmental studies, economics, business, or the sciences in cultural context, while ideally contributing also to Smith programs such as Film Studies, Jewish Studies, or Comparative Literature. In spite of some uncertainty about the future of the Junior Year Abroad program in Hamburg, CAP strongly supports this replacement request: enrollments in the department are strong, and we believe that, after having already sustained several reductions, German could scarcely mount a credible major without additional staffing. CAP therefore recommends that a tenure-track search be conducted in 2008-2009.

GOV

The Government Department submitted an emergency request for a tenure-track search next year to replace a March 2008 resignation in the field of international relations, the most popular concentration in this, the largest major at the College. The position would also serve Smith's International Relations minor and the Five-College Certificate in International Relations, and ultimately the new International Center. The new hire would focus on United States foreign policy and international security, areas of strong student interest not covered by the two remaining tenured international relations specialists. CAP therefore recommends that a tenure-track search be conducted in 2008-2009.

SOC

Having completed a search for a specialist in quantitative methods in 2007-2008, Sociology desires to fill a longstanding tenure-track vacancy with a specialist in social theory. Large enrollments have for years required a full-time non-tenure-track replacement, whose position has been extended only through 2008-2009. The gap in theory will not be plugged by the anticipated hiring of a social scientist of race in Afro-American Studies, nor can Five-College offerings and instructors meet the high demand. Since this appointment would not add to the overall size of the faculty, CAP recommends that a tenure-track search be conducted in 2008-2009.

THE

Theatre requests a tenure track replacement to teach directing and theatre history, having lost two acting/directing positions to retirements in the last 3 years. One of these positions constitutes a permanent reduction. The department has looked to the Five Colleges for assistance, but has found it difficult to utilize those resources. Indeed, the distinctiveness of Smith's Theatre program is its commitment to teaching the art of directing; in fact students from other colleges come to Smith as *the* campus to have experience directing productions as undergraduates. In the past academic year, the seven acting courses (all filled to capacity) were taught by seven different adjuncts, which is problematic as the course is a

critical component of the theatre curriculum and is the gateway to the major. None of the current tenure track faculty are junior; the department is desperately in need of “new blood,” especially in the critical areas of directing and acting.

CAP therefore recommends that a tenure-track search be conducted in 2008-2009.

Previous request for a non-tenure track position:

ESS

The Department of Exercise and Sports Studies requested in 2005-06 the conversion of a non-tenure track position, filled continuously since 1997-98 in various forms, to a regular lecturer position. The position was especially critical for the maintenance of the graduate program that in 2003 was accredited at the highest level, the only institution in the country to receive this rating. It was woven into the curriculum in a number of ways, including the teaching of both undergraduate courses and a large number of required graduate courses, as well as having oversight of the graduate program, and handling administrative duties of that program including advising all fifteen or so graduate students who teach undergraduate courses and serve as assistant coaches. CAP recommended in its 2006 report that “this position be authorized as soon as funding allows.” It continues to urge that this position be given highest priority for any future restructuring of the College’s FTE allocations.

New position request that should be carefully considered for the future:

CHM

The request from the Chemistry Department for a new, tenure-track position in Environmental Chemistry is based on two distinct rationales. The multiple sections of organic chemistry I and II are heavily enrolled by majors in chemistry, biology, biochemistry and neuroscience as well as by all pre-health students; this precludes enrollment limits. The staffing of the sequence consistently falls to three faculty members and limits the opportunities for the Department to offer first-year seminars or non-major courses. They seek an environmental chemist, not only to help with the organic chemistry courses, but also to contribute to new initiatives for their majors and those interested in Environmental Chemistry. Adding a lab component to the Environmental Chemistry course (CHM 108) and redesigning their junior/senior laboratory sequence to include, among others, a stronger analytical environmental chemistry course and lab would better prepare majors for the rapidly emerging field of environmental chemistry. This would also allow the Department to make a much stronger contribution to the Environmental Science and Policy Program (the minor as well as the proposed major, should it be approved) and have a significant impact on the Center for the Environment, Ecological Design, and Sustainability. A research program in the area of environmental chemistry would offer currently unavailable opportunities for students in chemistry, ES&P, and engineering. While recognizing the merits of this position from curricular and enrollment perspectives, CAP recommends the addition of this new faculty position be delayed until the situation with the ES&P major and the Center for the Environment, Ecological Design, and Sustainability becomes clearer. In the meantime it is recommended that temporary faculty support for teaching organic chemistry be continued.

Requests for positions that should not go forward, as they would add to the total FTE count:

ART & Technology [1.0 FTE new tenure-track position request]
EGR* [0.5 FTE new tenure-track position request]
REL/ARC [1.0 FTE new tenure-track position request]
SWG [request for an early replacement of a future retirement]

Requests for retirement replacements that should not go forward:

ENG (1.0 FTE)
MUS (1.0 FTE)
PHY* (0.5 FTE)

[Please see CAP's 4/11/08 *Report on Reducing the Size of the Faculty* regarding the final eight cuts and the subsequent 5/12/08 memo to the faculty from Carol Christ and Susan Bourque.]

* PHY has been reduced by 0.5 FTE while EGR has lost 0.5 FTE of a promised future 1.0 FTE tenure-track addition. In terms of looming retirements and upcoming searches it will be up to these departments to negotiate how this 1.0 reduction will be effected between them.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Academic Priorities
Ernest Benz
Richard Briggs
Alice Hearst
Jefferson Hunter
Cornelia Pearsall
Janie Vanpee
Doreen Weinberger

Authorizations from the Provost:

Based on the thoughtful recommendations of the CAP and my consultations with President Christ, I am pleased to authorize the following searches for 2008-09.

1. Afro-Am: tenure-track position in the social sciences
2. Anthropology: Five College joint tenure-track position in Latin American Archaeology, .5 at Smith.
3. Art: tenure-track position in 19th and 20th century European art and architectural history
4. Architecture: tenure-track position in studio architecture
5. Biology: tenure-track position in plant ecology and systematic
6. Dance: a tenure-track position in dance history and cultural dance
7. English: tenure-track position in the literature of the African diaspora
8. German: tenure-track position in language and literature
9. Government: tenure-track position in international relations, national security and foreign policy
10. History: tenure-track position in Medieval and Renaissance History
11. Psychology: tenure-track position in neuroscience
12. Sociology: tenure-track position in social theory
13. Theatre: tenure-track position in directing and acting

VII. Membership

June 2007 marked the end of the terms of four members of the committee, Ernest Benz, Dick Briggs, Jeff Hunter and Doreen Weinberger. Alice Hearst has agreed to remain on the committee for an additional year to support a smooth transition to the composition of the new committee. In addition, in 2008-09 we will welcome back continuing elected member Cornelia Pearsall and Janie Vanpee, Faculty Council representative, both of whom are now in their second year of service. They will be joined by three new elected members, Nick Horton, Joe McVeigh and Bill Oram. CAP will use its retreats in late

August and early September to identify the priority items on its 2008-09 agenda and will, as always, issue regular reports to the faculty at its monthly meetings.

VIII. A Look Ahead to CAP's Work for 2008-2009

The new members of CAP will hold its retreat on August 29, 2008 and will begin the task of setting their agenda items for this academic year. As mentioned in this report, the topics of Bachelor of Science degrees, establishing a quantitative requirement, writing assessment, and the appropriate follow-up for departmental/programmatic retreats will be discussed this year.

List of Appendices

- A. Priorities and Agenda Items from CAP Members for 2007—2008 and
Calendar of Discussion Points
- B. Memo regarding Follow-up Report on Retreat Activities
- C. Sophomore Writing Portfolio Assessment Pilot: 2006-2007, March 2008
- D. List of Presidential Seminars
- E. Grade Inflation Memorandum
- F. Committee on Academic Priorities: Report on Reducing the Size of the
Faculty, April 11, 2008
- G. Carol Christ memorandum regarding reducing the size of the faculty, April 12,
2008
- H. Liberal Arts Luncheons
- I. Faculty Leadership Seminars

Appendix A

Priorities and Agenda Items from CAP Members for 2007—2008

Below are agenda items generated by CAP members for discussion during the 2007-2008 academic year. The items were put into two broad groups: those that are related to the strategic plan, and those that are on-going CAP concerns.

Strategic Planning Issues

1. Clarify status of the 'capacities' discussion and finalize. Include “embodied knowledge” discussion.
2. Discussion of quantitative skills requirement and coding (QI) and class availability.
3. Discussion and/or development of an overall program for studying and improving teaching college-wide, beyond the Writing Center's Friday lunches--especially introducing more faculty to use of technology in classrooms. Discussion should tie in plans for and results from past faculty reading and discussion groups.
4. Discussion of what's going on with 'mapping the curriculum' in departments and programs--should CAP pull together and distribute ideas, for example? Mellon plans and update should be included. Also should include “flatness vs. graduated curriculum” and “embodied knowledge” discussions.

On-going CAP Concerns

1. Changes in the Honors system, i.e., setting the minimum GPA and devolving authority to departments & programs.
2. Discussion of policy on Honors Code violations and the impact on Departmental and other honors and distinctions.
3. Discussion of status of the Education and Child Studies "liberal arts" major.
4. Regularizing and improving the provision of statistics provided to CAP re enrollments, majors, FTE's, etc.
5. Grade inflation concerns.
6. Writing Portfolio Project.
7. Classes with travel components, especially those used to recruit top-level first-year students.

Calendar of CAP Discussion Points

Meeting	Topic Description	Done
9/5	Regularizing and improving the provision of statistics provided to CAP re enrollments, majors, FTE's, etc.	Y
10/17 (w/ CMP)	Curricular initiatives – classes with travel components.	Y
10/31	Faculty Staffing	Y
11/7	Curricular implementation	Y
	Changes in the Honors system, i.e., setting the minimum GPA and devolving authority to departments & programs.	Y
11/19	Grade inflation concerns.	Memo made
12/5	Discussion of quantitative skills requirement and coding (QI).	Memo made
	Student Curricular Committee -- Diversity	Y
12/11	Review of Dept'l Retreat Guidelines	Y
	Policy Sub work: FRN 399 portfolio and Museum Minor	Y
1/11	Faculty Reductions	Y
1/16	Discussion of what's going on with 'mapping the curriculum' in departments and programs--should CAP pull together and distribute ideas, for example? Mellon plans and update should be included. Also should include “flatness vs. graduated curriculum” and “embodied knowledge” discussions.	Y
1/22	Faculty Reductions	Y
2/6	Grade Inflation	Y
2/12	Canceled	
2/21	Discussion of quantitative skills requirement and coding (QI).	Y
	Grade Inflation	Y
3/5	Clarify status of the 'capacities' discussion and finalize. Include “embodied knowledge” discussion.	Y
	Diversity Requirement	Y
3/24	Writing Portfolio Project (Spring)	Y
4/2	Faculty Reductions	Y
	Pathways: Geology/BS degree	Y
4/16	Grade Inflation	Y
5/7	Discussion and/or development of an overall program for studying and improving teaching college-wide, beyond the Writing Center's Friday lunches--especially introducing more faculty to use of technology in classrooms. Discussion should tie in plans for and results from past faculty reading and discussion groups.	Y
5/14	With CMP	Y
5/27	Staffing and Dinner	Y

Appendix B



Memo

Subject: Follow-up Report on Retreat Activities
To: Chairs and Directors

Date: December 7, 2007
From: Susan C. Bourque, Provost

Dear Colleagues:

In the hope that it might be helpful to you as you structure your departmental retreats for curricular mapping within the major, CAP has suggested that the follow-up report on the retreat include the following information.

Please comment on the goals the department set for the retreat and your preliminary sense of the outcomes. In particular we would like to know if during the retreat you were able to advance any of the goals you set as a result of your mid-term or decennial reports, and if you developed plans to achieve those goals?

We hope you will use the retreat to identify the places in the department's curriculum and the major where you will integrate the intellectual capacities we have agreed should be part of every student's Smith career. For instance, are specific capacities such as writing, speaking or quantitative skills developed in particular courses, or a series of courses? Of the specific curricular goals identified by the faculty, which would be furthered within the major? (We have attached that list for your convenience.)

In addition, we would be interested in knowing if the department has integrated the development of student research abilities in the structure of the major? For instance, is there an information literacy program in place for students who major in the department? Is there a research methods course recommended for your majors (either in your own department or another department)? If so, when in the student's career does she take this course, or encounter appropriate methods?

Are the pathways through the major clear for prospective majors? Is the department satisfied with the level of advanced work accomplished by its majors? (It may be useful to review the transcripts of graduating majors, or to examine the course-taking patterns of several recent groups of senior majors.)

Finally, what are the culminating or capstone experiences for students in your major?

It would be useful for CAP to have a brief summary of any proposed changes to be considered by the department and any associated timeline for those changes.

We hope these suggestions will be useful to chairs and directors and that the retreats and conversations will be productive and advance our common goals.

Appendix C



Sophomore Writing Portfolio Assessment Pilot: 2006-2007
March, 2008

Julio Alves
Director, Jacobson Center for Writing, Teaching and Learning
Cate Rowen
Director, Institutional Research and Educational Assessment

Background

In the summer of 2006, Provost Susan Bourque convened a working group of faculty and administrators to discuss systematic writing assessment at Smith. The working group consisted of Susan Bourque (Provost and Dean of the Faculty), Susan Etheredge (Associate Professor of Education and then-Interim Dean of the Faculty), Doreen Weinberger (Associate Professor of Physics), Jane Stangl (Lecturer in Exercise and Sports Studies and Interim Dean of the First-Year Class), Cate Rowen (Director of Institutional Research and Educational Assessment), Robert Hosmer (Senior Lecturer in English), and Julio Alves (Director of the Jacobson Center). The group aimed to pilot different methods of assessing writing, with the long-term goal of selecting a permanent, meaningful means of assessing writing at Smith, and the short-term goal of evaluating the status of student writing at the first-year and sophomore levels at Smith College.

Over the summer of 2006, the working group met to decide on a plan of action. After some discussion, we decided to assess the quality of the writing of first-year students upon completion of their WI requirement and the quality of the writing of sophomores produced in the course of students' first two years at Smith. The first-year component took place in the fall of 2006, when we asked instructors of WI courses to select each first-year student's best piece of writing in the course and assess it according to criteria described in an explanatory rubric. The sophomore component took place over the course of 2006-2007 and took the form of portfolio assessment.

Portfolio assessment is an established, well-regarded means of assessing writing in primary, secondary, and higher education. We aimed to recruit approximately 10% of the sophomore class, about 65 students, for this project. We invited 150 randomly selected sophomores, all of whom started as first-time first-year students in the fall of 2005. Of these, 65 agreed to participate, but only 38 provided both portfolios and consent documents and had their portfolios read. We judged the sample size adequate for a pilot.

As both an incentive and a token of appreciation, we offered participants \$25 gift certificates to the Campus Bookstore.

The data collected from this pilot project, we thought, would allow us to assess the following:

- 1) Whether requiring a writing portfolio assessment of all students at the end of the sophomore year will
 - a. provide valuable information on student competencies,
 - b. allow for identification of students entering majors in need of additional help with writing skills,
 - c. serve as an opportunity for self-reflection about the student's own writing, and
 - d. provide feedback and guidance on the process of teaching writing at Smith.
- 2) The extent to which students at Smith enter their majors well-prepared as writers for future academic work.
- 3) Whether the logistical and operational challenges of a large-scale writing portfolio evaluation process are practical and affordable at Smith.
- 4) Whether students have positive experiences with the process of developing and receiving feedback on their writing portfolios.

We asked students to commit to the following in preparing their portfolios:

- Providing clean copies of 3 or 4 of their *best* papers (approximately 15 pages of text) written during their first two years at Smith
- Completing an Authentication Sheet (a cover sheet) for each paper
- Submitting their portfolios for review

We advised students that writing counselors at the Jacobson Center would be available to help them put their portfolios together, that a team of Smith faculty members would read their portfolios, and that, at the end of the process, Jacobson Center writing counselors would be available to discuss the evaluation of their work with them. We reassured participants that the results of this portfolio review would not be recorded on their transcript or in any permanent file at Smith. Rather, the portfolio project would be an opportunity for them to gather their writing and reflect on their growth as writers during their first two years at Smith.

After selecting their best papers, students were asked to complete an Authentication Sheet for each one. The Authentication Sheet first asked the student to provide information about the course in which the paper was written: the course number, title, department, and instructor. Then it asked her to obtain and provide a fresh, unmarked copy of a paper submitted for the course, and whether she revised the paper for the portfolio. It also asked for a copy of the assignment; if the student did not have one, she was asked to "tell us what assignment you were responding to." Finally, the Authentication Sheet asked the student to describe how this paper met the required portfolio criteria: the ability to make a convincing argument, work with and document multiple sources, and write in a variety of disciplines (Div. 1, 2, and/or 3). A single paper, the Authentication Sheet stated, may meet more than one criterion. A copy of the

authentication sheet, along with the rubric and recruitment materials, is provided in Appendix A.

Thirteen faculty members gathered in June 2007 to read the portfolios. The following departments were represented: Afro-American Studies, Art, Biology, Education and Child Study, English, Government, Psychology, Spanish and Portuguese, Theatre, and Exercise and Sports Studies. We asked readers to read holistically, in other words, to read all the papers and assess them as a body of work. We gave readers a scoring sheet for each portfolio, which asked them to assess the students' current abilities—as either pass, needs work, or exemplary—in the following areas:

- Statement of thesis
- Development through supporting arguments
- Assembly & presentation of evidence
- Paragraph development
- Complexity of thought
- Command of citation conventions
- Command of written English

A rubric described each criterion at each level of ability. Within each level, readers chose among high, medium, and low proficiency. We also asked readers to assess the entire portfolio as pass, needs work, or exemplary, and to write a final comment for the student. Portfolios rated as pass were read once (except for the few read twice as a reliability check). Portfolios rated as needs work or exemplary were read twice. If the readers disagreed on the rating, they met at the end of the reading process to discuss their differences, settle on a rating, and complete a new scoring sheet.

Fourteen portfolios were read twice because they were they were rated as needs work or exemplary, or because they were read by Doreen Weinberger or Julio Alves; their scores were disregarded because they were members of the committee. Three portfolios rated as pass were re-read randomly for reliability. The assessment of 6 portfolios was negotiated at the end of the reading session. A total of 67 scores were recorded. (The 12 readings that went to negotiation were recorded but not included in the final analysis—only the negotiated scores were recorded in those cases).

The data

Readers rated 62.7% of the portfolios as pass, 32% as needs work, and 5.3% as exemplary. (In real numbers, they rated 24 portfolios as pass, 12 as needs work, and 2 as exemplary.) Similar patterns hold across the sub-skills.

Students' weakest skill is complexity of thought (36.6% needs work), followed by paragraph development (31% needs work), supporting arguments (30% needs work), statement of thesis (29.6% needs work), command of written English (26.8% needs work), and assembly of evidence (25.4% needs work). Students' strongest skill is assembly of evidence (12.7% exemplary), followed by command of written English (11.3% exemplary), complexity of thought (11.3% exemplary), paragraph development

(11.3% exemplary), supporting arguments (8.5% exemplary), and statement of thesis (2.8% exemplary).

Sometimes overall strengths and weaknesses are well balanced. Assembly of evidence and command of written English show the greatest balance between needs work and exemplary ratings. For example, readers rated 25% of the portfolios as needing work in assembly of evidence and 13% as exemplary. Polarities are more apparent among other skills, with readers rating much more writing as needs work than exemplary. For example, readers rated 27% of portfolios as needing work in statement of thesis and only 3% as exemplary.

Table 1: Overall Scores, Summarized

	Needs work	Pass	Exemplary
Statement of thesis	29.6%	67.6%	2.8%
Supporting Arguments	30.0%	62.9%	7.1%
Assembly of Evidence	25.4%	62.0%	12.7%
Paragraph Development	31.0%	62.0%	7.0%
Complexity of Thought	36.6%	54.9%	8.5%
Command of English	26.8%	62.0%	11.3%
Overall Score	32.0%	62.7%	5.3%

On average, readers rated our sophomores' writing as low-pass, with mean ratings in the sub-skills ranging from 4.01 to 4.55 points out of a possible 9 (with 9 being strongest). The mean for the overall score is 1.73 (out of 3, with 3 being strongest). The most common score for each sub-skill is mid-pass. The sole exception is complexity of thought, where the most common score is low-pass and the second most common high-needs work. Paragraph development is a second marked weakness, with 56.4% of the scores below the mid-pass range and only 14% above. While low-needs work scores are few, no score of high exemplary was given to any student for any skill.

Table 2: Overall Scores, Detail

	Needs Work			Pass			Exemplary		
	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
Statement of thesis	2.80%	15.50%	11.30%	23.90%	32.40%	11.30%	1.40%	1.40%	0.00%
Supporting Arguments	4.30%	12.90%	12.90%	18.60%	32.90%	11.40%	5.70%	1.40%	0.00%

Assembly of Evidence	2.80%	7.00%	15.50%	22.50%	25.40%	14.10%	11.30%	1.40%	0.00%
Paragraph Development	2.80%	14.10%	14.10%	25.40%	29.60%	7.00%	5.60%	1.40%	0.00%
Complexity of Thought	1.40%	14.10%	21.10%	33.80%	14.10%	7.00%	7.00%	1.40%	0.00%
Command of English	1.40%	8.50%	16.90%	19.70%	28.20%	14.10%	8.50%	2.80%	0.00%
Overall Score		32.00%			62.70%			5.30%	

Table 3: Mean Scores

	Mean
Statement of thesis	4.14
Supporting Arguments	4.27
Assembly of Evidence	4.55
Paragraph Development	4.15
Complexity of Thought	4.01
Command of English	4.55
Overall Score (1-3)	1.73

First-generation students continue to present a unique profile as weaker writers, though we must tread very carefully here because of our small numbers: 8 first-generation and 28 not first-generation. The score differences between first-generation and non-first-generation students were not statistically significant; further research will be necessary to confirm these findings statistically. First-generation students scored more poorly in every sub-skill than students who are not first-generation. In the end, 57.1% of the first-generation students' portfolios need work (compared to 23.7% of the portfolios of students who are not first-generation), 42.9% pass (compared to 69.5% of the portfolios of students who are not first-generation), and 0% are exemplary (compared to 6.8% of the portfolios of students who are not first-generation). The greatest weaknesses are in complexity of thought, command of written English, and paragraph development. No reader gave a portfolio presented by a first-generation student an exemplary rating in any sub-skill. Differences in command of written English between first-generation students and those not first-generation approach statistical significance. These findings are worth pondering despite the small sample because they are consistent with the results of our much larger WI study, where similar findings broadly achieved statistical significance.

Table 4: First Generation Students

		First-Generation		Non First-generation	
		Count	%	Count	%
Statement of thesis	Needs work	3	35.70%	7	25.50%
	Pass	5	64.30%	20	70.90%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	1	3.60%
Supporting Arguments	Needs work	3	38.50%	7	25.50%
	Pass	4	61.50%	18	65.50%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	3	9.10%
Assembly of Evidence	Needs work	3	35.70%	6	20.00%
	Pass	5	64.30%	18	63.60%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	5	16.40%
Paragraph Development	Needs work	4	50.00%	7	23.60%
	Pass	4	50.00%	19	67.30%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	3	9.10%
Complexity of Thought	Needs work	5	64.30%	8	27.30%
	Pass	3	35.70%	17	61.80%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	3	10.90%
Command of English	Needs work	4	57.10%	5	16.40%
	Pass	3	42.90%	19	69.10%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	4	14.50%
Overall Score	Needs work	4	57.10%	7	23.70%
	Pass	3	42.90%	21	69.50%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	2	6.80%

The portfolio ratings correlate well with SAT Verbal scores and admissions reader ratings. Dividing SAT Verbal scores into quartiles (<590, 590-680, 680-720, 720-800) reveals that the percentage of needs work portfolios is highest among low-scoring students and lowest among high-scoring students. No student in the top half received an overall needs work mark and no student in the lower half received an overall exemplary mark. The results are statistically significant at the .05 level (*chi-square*), though, again, we must keep in mind that the sample is small. A staggering 66.7% of portfolios presented by students in the lowest quartile need work, and 50% of portfolios in the second quartile do so, while no portfolio in the top two quartiles needs work. Pass rates are highest in the top two quartiles, the biggest jump occurring right down the middle between the second and third quartile. Statistical significance also occurs in two sub-skills, paragraph development and complexity of thought, and is almost achieved in command of written English. Of particular note, 72.2% of portfolios in the lowest quartile need work in

complexity of thought, and only portfolios in the bottom two quartiles need work in paragraph development and command of English.

Table 5: SAT Verbal Quartile

		SATV <590		SATV 590-680		SATV 680-720		SATV 720-800	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Supporting Arguments	Needs work	6	61.10%	2	23.50%	1	13.30%	1	14.30%
	Pass	4	38.90%	6	64.70%	6	73.30%	6	78.60%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	1	11.80%	1	13.30%	1	7.10%
Assembly of Evidence	Needs work	5	50.00%	3	33.30%	0	0.00%	1	7.10%
	Pass	5	50.00%	5	55.60%	6	73.30%	6	78.60%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	1	11.10%	2	26.70%	1	14.30%
Paragraph Development*	Needs work	5	55.60%	5	55.60%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	Pass	4	44.40%	4	44.40%	6	80.00%	6	85.70%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	20.00%	1	14.30%
Complexity of Thought*	Needs work	7	72.20%	3	33.30%	2	26.70%	0	0.00%
	Pass	3	27.80%	6	66.70%	4	53.30%	6	78.60%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	20.00%	2	21.40%
Command of English	Needs work	5	55.60%	4	38.90%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	Pass	4	44.40%	5	55.60%	6	73.30%	6	78.60%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	1	5.60%	2	26.70%	2	21.40%
Overall Score*	Needs work	6	66.70%	5	50.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	Pass	3	33.30%	5	50.00%	7	86.70%	7	87.50%
	Exemplary	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	13.30%	1	12.50%

* $p \leq .05$ chi-square

If we divide the study participants into a high and low group based on their SAT Verbal scores, a 680 score is the dividing mark (i.e., half the participants scored above 680 and half scored below 680). In future, SAT writing scores will likely be even more interesting, but writing scores were not available for this class. Differences are statistically significant for the overall rating and in the sub-skills assembly of evidence, paragraph development, complexity of thought, and command of English.

Portfolio ratings also correlate with high and low admissions reader ratings, high being 1-4 and low being 5-8, with more than five times as many portfolios of students with low ratings needing work than portfolios of students with high ratings (54.5% vs. 10%). Statistical significance of similar magnitude also occurs in three sub-skills: paragraph development, complexity of thought, and command of written English. In paragraph development, 55.2% of the portfolios of students with low reader ratings need work,

compared to 10% of the portfolios of students with high reader ratings; 58.6% in complexity of thought, compared to 17.5%; and 51.7% in command of written English, compared to 5%.

Table 6: High or Low Reader Rating

		High Reader Rating		Low Reader Rating	
		Count	%	Count	%
Supporting Arguments	Needs work	4	17.50%	6	42.90%
	Pass	14	70.00%	8	57.10%
	Exemplary	3	12.50%	0	0.00%
Assembly of Evidence	Needs work	3	12.50%	6	37.90%
	Pass	14	70.00%	8	55.20%
	Exemplary	4	17.50%	1	6.90%
Paragraph Development*	Needs work	2	10.00%	8	55.20%
	Pass	17	85.00%	5	34.50%
	Exemplary	1	5.00%	2	10.30%
Complexity of Thought*	Needs work	4	17.50%	9	58.60%
	Pass	15	75.00%	5	31.00%
	Exemplary	2	7.50%	2	10.30%
Command of English*	Needs work	1	5.00%	8	51.70%
	Pass	16	80.00%	6	41.40%
	Exemplary	3	15.00%	1	6.90%
Overall Score*	Needs work	2	10.00%	9	54.50%
	Pass	17	85.00%	7	39.40%
	Exemplary	1	5.00%	1	6.10%

These statistically significant data are worth mentioning despite the small sample because they are very consistent and they echo the findings of the WI study, which found paragraph development to be a particular weakness of poor writers and a relative strength of good writers.

Reader feedback

After reading the portfolios, readers discussed their impressions of the portfolios and the assessment process. Much consensus emerged about the quality of the portfolio writing,

the future of writing assessment at Smith, and improvements in the portfolio process. Readers also raised two major concerns about assessment that are worth noting.

Quality of student writing

- Many readers were struck by the poor quality of the writing. They thought that students overestimate their abilities and would be shocked by their portfolio evaluations.
- On the one hand, readers were struck by the paucity of thesis. On the other hand, they recognized that many of the assignments did not require students to take a position. In other words, while readers felt certain that the students had a weak sense of what it means to make an argument, they also thought that at least some weak writing may well have been the result of poorly conceived assignments. One assignment, for example, was so long and detailed that even the readers struggled to understand what it was asking.
- Paragraph development can be a real strength or weakness in students' writing. Some readers felt paragraph development is easy to teach, others thought it hard.
- In assessing student research, readers complained about seeing too many references to Wikipedia. Generally, students needed to use more academic primary and secondary sources, and be able to document these better, readers thought.

Suggestions for writing assessment at Smith

- Some readers thought that we should be clearer about our assessment goals. Are we looking back and assessing what students have done or are we looking forward and assessing how well prepared students are for the next phase of scholarship?
- Many readers spoke to the issue of sequential writing assessment, for example, in the first-year and then in the major (done by departments). Portfolio assessment could be done in the major.
- Some non-science readers lacked confidence in evaluating science writing, but many felt that any piece of writing, even scientific writing, should be lucid enough to be understood by a non-specialized, educated audience.
- Readers would like to see more self-assessment on the part of students and see them take more responsibility in creating their portfolios. Perhaps students could give their advisors their best paper from each year, readers thought.
- Students should be able to see model papers, what we consider excellent papers. Faculty would benefit as well from seeing excellent writing in the different disciplines.

Specific suggestions for improving future portfolio assessment

- Readers would like to see more reflection on the students' part, so they could more easily enter into a conversation with students. Some readers thought *reflection* did not get at the heart of what we want, however. These readers thought that we want students to make statements about their writing's strengths and weaknesses. They thought we should ask a question that forces self-criticism.

The readers have aspects of writing (criteria) that they need to think about in the assessment process. The students should, too.

- Readers would benefit from seeing model written comments on the portfolios, or at least get more guidance on writing the comments.
- The grading rubric is more appropriate for assessing first-year writing than sophomore writing, readers thought. This critique reflects the fact that the rubric used was based on learning goals for Smith's first-year writing program. A permanent sophomore writing program should begin by setting performance standards for sophomore writing, which could then drive a revised rubric.
- Readers found the category *Complexity of thought* difficult to assess because we do not know if the student is presenting original work or simply reiterating class discussion.
- Readers would like to require students to include a copy of the assignment. The assignment helps the reader understand the paper. Although assignments were reported by the student when unavailable, some students did not adequately explain the assignment.
- And they would like a stricter limit on the number of pages. This concern has budgetary implications as well, since overly long portfolios take a significant amount of faculty time to read.

Concerns

- What happens to students who *need work*? We also need to be careful with our language. All students still "need work."
- Who is going to do the work of overseeing writing assessment? It's a job in itself.

Conclusion

Sophomore portfolio assessment has many benefits as a means of assessing writing, mostly pedagogical. Students benefit from reflecting on their writing halfway through their college career. Placing the burden on them to select their best papers and articulate why these papers represent their best writing must surely lead to some degree of reflection. The assessment itself gives them feedback about their preparedness to write in the major. Faculty benefit from exposure to a wide range of assignments and student writing, which leads to joint and individual reflection about their own expectations and practices, and they benefit from collaboratively engaging with colleagues across the disciplines in a pedagogical endeavor, colleagues whom they may not see much and with whom they may not engage much. Ultimately, the portfolio reading experience will lead to greater collegiality and better, more consistent teaching of writing.

To undertake such a project as a universal requirement at Smith would entail a significant investment, in terms of administrative and clerical staff time, as well as significant investment in faculty stipends. Portfolio assessment is an expensive, labor intensive proposition. Supporting a class of 650 students in gathering and selecting papers for their portfolios is a big job, as is ensuring that all students turn in complete portfolios. Portfolios have to be archived, and copied for future analysis. They have to be organized for reading. Faculty have to be found year after year to read over a period of days (probably 50 faculty members over a period of 3 mornings to cover the entire sophomore

class at Smith). They have to be paid and fed. The data collected has to be managed. Reports have to be provided to students and follow up will have to be done with them.

In addition to resource challenges posed by the logistics of the project, we believe that portfolio assessment is only really effective as a universal requirement. A voluntary process would take nearly as many administrative and faculty resources, but would likely miss many of the students who are at the most risk of entering the major with substandard writing skills.

The issue of follow up is particularly thorny for us because so many of our students go abroad in their junior year for a full year, which means that follow up cannot be done until the senior year, which is much too late to address deficiencies in writing. It's, in fact, the situation we are trying to avoid with mid-career assessment. On the other hand, it is not wise to have to have first-year portfolio assessment, because the labor and costs would be the same but the students will not have done enough writing to put together a mature, varied portfolio.

We are concerned about the overall low scores in the pilot study. We had concerns about the representativeness of our sample, but we expected the scores to be weighted toward the higher end on the assumption that good writers who wanted to showcase their writing would be more likely to volunteer for the pilot. We were surprised (and a little alarmed) by the results. We continue to be especially concerned about first-generation students as a cohort. Clearly, we need a means of writing assessment that identifies weak writers mid-career, but the end of the sophomore year may be too late and ineffective. (Do we want to be teaching juniors and seniors about statement of thesis and paragraph development?)

In sum, we like portfolio writing assessment, but we are aware that undertaking a permanent portfolio requirement at Smith will require a significant commitment of time and resources, and we encourage the administration to consider whether that commitment of resources is well-matched by the project's potential benefits.

Appendix D

Presidential Seminars 2008-2009

Presidential Seminars (PRS) are interdisciplinary seminars that provide advanced students (juniors and seniors) with an opportunity to grapple with complex, challenging problems that require multiple disciplinary perspectives and methods to analyze them. These seminars enable juniors and seniors to bring to bear their talents and apply their acquired knowledge to problems of significance.

PRS 301 Translating New Worlds

(E) {A/H/L} 4 credits

Dana Leibsohn (Art) and Ann Jones (Comparative Literature)

Offered Fall 2008

PRS 302 Whose Voice? Whose Tongue? The Indian Renaissance and its Aftermath

(E) {L/H} 4 credits

Jay Garfield and Nalini Bhushan (Philosophy)

Offered Fall 2008

PRS 303 Talking Trash

(E) {S} 4 credits

Elizabeth V. Spelman (Philosophy)

Offered Spring 2009

PRS 304 Happiness: Buddhist and Psychological Understandings of Personal Well-Being

(E) {S/N} 4 credits

Philip Peake (Psychology) and Jamie Hubbard (Religion)

Offered Fall 2008

PRS 305 Cultural Literacy

(E) {H/L/S} 4 credits

Kevin Quashie (Afro-American Studies) and Susan Van Dyne (Study of Women and Gender)

Offered Spring 2009

PRS 306 *Beowulf* and Archaeology

(E) {L/H/A} 4 credits

Craig R. Davis (English)

Offered Spring 2010

Appendix E

April 14, 2008

To: Chairs and directors
From: CAP
Re: Grade inflation

Dear Colleagues:

This semester CAP has discussed grade inflation at Smith. In this memo we summarize our thinking on the issue and now turn to you as chairs and directors for your opinion, before proceeding to more detailed planning and, possibly, faculty legislation.

The current situation. The most recent tabulation of Smith grades (from the Registrar's office) is as follows, by percentage and for 2006-2007:

	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-
Percentage	26.17	22.6	19.33	13.67	6.16	2.63	2.18	
1.12								
Cumulative percentage	26.17	48.77	68.1	81.77	87.93	90.56	92.74	
93.86								
	D+	D	D-	E	S	U		
Percentage	0.34	0.4	0.18	0.9	4.13	0.19		
Cumulative percentage	94.2	94.6	94.79	95.69	99.81	100.00		

The percentage of A's and A-'s awarded has remained fairly constant over the last decade or so. In 1997-98, for instance, 46.49% of grades awarded fell into this category. The lowest percentage of A's and A-'s awarded in the period is 44.87% (2000-2001); the highest is 48.77%, from last year. The percentage of grades below B- has also remained quite stable over the period.

The picture we are thus confronted with is not a runaway increase in grade inflation, but a steady very high level of A's and A-'s awarded, with a concomitant low level of grades below B-. (There may be a *slight* increase in the number of A's and A-'s awarded; every year since 2000-2001 has seen an increase.) In other words, we seem to be facing not an acute or dramatically worsening condition, but a chronic one. And we believe it is a condition which needs treatment. The number of high grades awarded year in and year out seems flatly to belie the definitions of grades given in the *Faculty Code* (section 61b), where A is said to mean "Excellent," B "Good," and so on. Do we as a faculty collectively believe that very nearly half of the work we see from our students merits the label "Excellent"? That very nearly 88% of the work we see is "Excellent" or "Good"? Surely, the huge number of A's and A-'s which we award diminishes the value of those

marks for those of our students who do in fact produce excellent work. It's not just in national economies that bad currency drives out good. And it's not just in the world of the Savoy operas that "When everybody's somebody, / Then no one's anybody."

Smith is not alone in experiencing grade inflation, of course. It is a common phenomenon of contemporary higher education, especially in the more selective four-year institutions. Recent news reports have discussed grade inflation at Harvard, Princeton, and many other places; attempts to hold the line on grades or actively deflate them have also been in the news (for example, the *New York Times* article "Can Tough Grades be Fair Grades," by Samuel Freedman, June 7, 2006; we can furnish copies if anyone's interested). For an extremely interesting and statistics-rich website on the issue, we urge you to see <http://gradeinflation.com>. At one sister institution of Smith's, Wellesley College, in response to grade inflation there, the faculty voted in April, 2004, to institute a new grading policy. For a description, see www.wellesley.edu/DeanStudent/gradingfaq.html .

A model for what we might do. For possible guidance on a course of action at Smith, Princeton seems a possible exemplar, in having studied the issue with commendable rigor and instituted a policy somewhat simpler than Wellesley's. Confronted with evidence of grade inflation at the university (for instance, over the three-year period 2001-2004, humanities courses awarded an average of 55.5% A+'s, A's, and A-'s; averages in other divisions were somewhat lower), the Princeton faculty in spring 2004 voted to adopt new, explicit grading standards. Under this policy, all academic departments and programs are to award fewer than 35% A's in undergraduate courses; in courses for juniors and seniors involving independent student work (these are required at Princeton), the limit is 55% A's. The statistic by which a department's grading results are evaluated is the percentage of A's awarded over a three-year period.

In 2007, Princeton was able to examine results of the new policy. These were encouraging, according to the Dean of the College, Nancy Weiss Malkiel (a Smith alumna, incidentally). That is, in the period 2004-2007, the percentage of A's awarded was 40.6%, down from 47.0% in 2001-2004. (These numbers are quoted from a university news release, which reviews the history of the whole policy: see www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/S19/00/61C05 .) Humanities departments and engineering departments had not met the 35% standard, whereas social science and natural science departments had either met the standard or were very close to it; nevertheless, *all* divisions had significantly decreased the number of A's awarded. Departments with "the most ground to cover made the most progress—five departments reduced their percentage of A grades by as much as 15 percentage points." The news release goes on to note that the more rigorous grading standards have not deterred students from electing majors in departments giving the fewest A's, nor have they hindered Princeton students "in terms of finding jobs or getting into graduate and professional schools." For more on the Princeton policy, see the FAQs page on their website: <http://www.princeton.edu/odoc/faculty/grading/faq/> . Princeton transcripts now come accompanied by an exceptionally clear and detailed statement of the grading policy,

so people outside the university can understand the new, somewhat lower, grades in proper context (again, we can supply copies).

Recommendation. In order to get discussion going, here is what we propose: **that Smith adopt a policy similar to Princeton's, that is, a new grading standard stating that the number of A's (straight A's and A-'s) awarded in Smith undergraduate courses be limited to 35%.** Different percentages might be used— 30% or even 25%—but for the sake of simplicity we will employ Princeton's number, not bothering with a separate standard for independent work. Obviously the number to be chosen is up for debate. As at Princeton, departments' and programs' compliance with the new standard would be assessed over a three-year period.

Three other recommendations follow from the one above. First, Smith transcripts should come accompanied by a statement about the new grading standards. Second, chairs and directors should be empowered to see numbers of grades awarded *course by course* in their departments and programs (at present the Registrar supplies only data by course level). We think chairs and directors should have a role in discussing grading standards with colleagues who consistently miss the 35% target, and knowing what grades are actually being awarded is an obvious necessity for such a role. Third, the Provost should be urged to bring the issue of grade inflation up at meetings with her counterparts at other selective liberal arts colleges, to explain Smith's new policy, and to ask other colleges to adapt an identical or similar policy. The strongest possible message about grade inflation would be the one delivered jointly by Smith, Amherst, Williams, Pomona, Swarthmore, Haverford, etc. Joint action would also, of course, put our students on a level playing field with those at other institutions.

Appendix F

Committee on Academic Priorities: Report on Reducing the Size of the Faculty April 11, 2008

Introduction

At the request of the Provost and President, the elected members of the Committee on Academic Priorities have this semester worked on a plan to reduce the size of the Smith faculty by eight positions. As a first step, the Provost furnished us with a list of departments and programs which in her view might be designated for a reduction at some point in the next five years. (When during this period a designated department suffers a loss from a resignation above the assistant professor rank, or a retirement, the loss is not to be replaced.) It has been our task to revise the Provost's list, talk with departments, and present recommendations to the Provost and President, who will make the final decisions about designations.

After discussion, we removed from the Provost's list some departments and programs which we thought should not be reduced, and added a few which we wished to consider for a reduction. In the end, we had a list of fourteen departments and programs for review. We met with representatives from all fourteen and asked them, in each case, to explain what they saw as their department's role in the College and to discuss the consequences of a possible reduction on their major and their offerings generally; in many cases we were given extensive supporting materials to read. The conversations with our colleagues were frank, wide-ranging, and helpful, and we are grateful to them for meeting with us at short notice and for being willing to participate in a process which could not but be painful.

In thinking about which departments and programs to designate for a reduction, we have kept in mind a range of considerations—data from the last three years on course enrollments and numbers of majors; data about staffing levels, especially if there has been a recent increase in staffing; our understanding of the academic priorities of the College, as these have been articulated by CAP (see the statement at <http://www.smith.edu/deanoffaculty/CAPsCriteriaforAcademicPriorities.pdf>); our sense of a department's contributions to the work of other departments and its furnishing of service courses to Smith students; the need to preserve, when possible, Smith's historic strengths; and possible ameliorations of the effect of a reduction, as for example from Five College co-operation. Some of our recommended reductions are premised on an expectation that the administration will work to secure better Five College cooperation, for example in identifying courses offered elsewhere that can meet an anticipated increase in curricular needs, and in facilitating course scheduling and student transport from campus to campus. In making our recommendations we have *not* considered personnel issues, i.e., knowledge of or speculation about when individual members of the faculty might be expected to retire.

We are presenting our recommendations to the Provost and President in this report; in keeping with longstanding CAP policy, the report will be made public to the faculty.

Summary

We recommend that the following departments and programs be designated for an eventual reduction:

Engineering	1.0 FTE	
English		1.0
Music	1.0	
Afro-American Studies		0.5
American Studies	0.5	
Comparative Literature		1.0
Computer Science	1.0	
Philosophy	1.0	
Russian		1.0
—		
Total	8.0 FTE	

In the case of the first three departments listed above, we were unanimous in thinking that a reduction, however much to be regretted, would nevertheless permit the department to carry on its work. (In the case of Engineering, a minority of members favored postponing rather than eliminating the search for a final, tenth position.) With the second group of six, there was a less confident sense that a reduction could be tolerated; in some cases a significant minority voted against reduction. In particular, some CAP members could not identify a total of 8.0 FTE cuts to be made from the list of fourteen and felt quite strongly that the Committee had neither adequate time nor complete enough information to engage in the holistic curricular review that would seem to be called for in making such momentous decisions. Nevertheless, a majority of the elected members of CAP voted to designate these departments for a future reduction, and we are forwarding all the listed departments as the recommendation of the whole committee.

Notes follow on each department or program, including departments and programs to whom we spoke but decided not to put on the list for a reduction. In several cases, we have made our recommendation with certain riders or contingencies in mind. These are detailed below, and we would wish the Provost and President to understand that we recommend them as firmly as the reductions themselves.

Notes on departments and programs

Afro-American Studies and *American Studies*: Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE. We recommend a 1.0 FTE reduction shared between these two departments. There is considerable cross listing of courses between the two, and it appears that both departments will be able to sustain their curricula with a 0.5 reduction apiece. Afro-American Studies, American Studies, and History worked over the last year to coordinate curricular needs, with the result that History has hired a new American historian whose courses will contribute to both American Studies and Afro-American Studies, and all three programs are amenable to continuing to work together. Reducing Afro-American Studies by 0.5 FTE will limit the number of courses that the Department can offer focusing on the African diaspora, and the major requires two such courses. This recommendation to take a total of 0.5 FTE from Afro-American Studies, therefore, is premised on the assumption that the English Department will be allowed to move ahead immediately with a new hire whose specialties include literatures of the African diaspora. The American Studies Program at Smith stands out among undergraduate liberal arts institutions in the United States and is particularly strong in teaching students a distinctive methodology, which is not available at other programs in the Valley. While it may absorb this reduction, it will have little leeway to teach courses outside of its core.

While a majority of the members of CAP believe that these two departments can sustain their curricula, there are additional concerns that must be addressed. As in many small departments that rely on cross-listed courses, reducing the number of faculty complicates achieving a fair distribution of administrative work, as faculty members whose courses are cross-listed may not necessarily take on administrative tasks. This problem is compounded when faculty are from historically under-represented groups; such faculty often take on a disproportionate share of work on committees and in programs provided through the co-curriculum. Thus, this reduction requires the College to take renewed steps to attract new colleagues from historically under-represented groups across the faculty.

Classics. No reduction recommended. The Classics Department trains students in two languages, both of which require a full sequence of courses, and offers majors in Greek, Latin, Classics and Classical Studies. Its number of majors and course enrollments are healthy for a department of its size. Some more advanced language courses inevitably draw lower enrollments, but members of the department have been exemplary in their innovation of a range of courses in translation that have proven extremely attractive to students throughout the College. A faculty reduction would make it difficult to continue these popular offerings, and would have a negative impact on the regular contributions which Classics makes to the Program in the Study of Women and Gender, Comparative Literature, English, and the First Year Seminar program. We are also concerned about the impact a faculty reduction would have on major requirements in Comparative Literature, and recommend that when a new position in Classics becomes available, the position be replaced by a faculty member with a contractual commitment to Comparative Literature (as is the case with a current faculty member in Classics), who can contribute on a regular basis to the teaching of CLT 202/203 (Western Literature in Translation), a foundational course for Comparative Literature, Classics, and English.

Comparative Literature. Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE. Comparative Literature is a vibrant major with an increasingly global focus and strong links to a range of other departments and programs. The program currently has three FTE (although half of one faculty member's courses are committed to another department) and has contractual arrangements for an additional 1.25 FTE. Even with a reduction, the program's staffing appears sufficient in relation to its course enrollments and number of majors. Nevertheless, to sustain its major, Comparative Literature is dependent on the contributions of faculty from a number of departments. It has already been affected by retirements in departments such as French and German. We are concerned that impending retirements in Comparative Literature as well as in English, Classics, and Russian could have a significant further impact on the curriculum as a whole and in particular on the staffing of CLT 202/203. We recommend that the next position in Classics include a contractual commitment to Comparative Literature, in order to continue to staff this and other critical courses.

Computer Science. Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE. The national trend for a number of years has shown a declining interest in computer science, although recently a slight reversal has been noticed, but mainly for men, not for women. This diminished interest is reflected in the enrollment figures and number of majors for Computer Science. Although the recommended reduction of 1.0 FTE will necessitate some curricular restructuring, we are persuaded that the department can continue to offer a major, although the ramifications of such a reduction are reason for concern. The department's likely response to a reduction would be to focus its energies on its majors, maintaining core offerings and selected upper-level courses. The department currently has staffing concerns, as it has lost 0.25 FTE to Engineering, has historically absorbed its Picker and sabbatical leaves, and has no lab instructors. There is no relief possible from the latter teaching responsibility, to allow the full-time faculty to cover other classes. Any staffing reduction would jeopardize the department's non-major courses and, very important, the critical faculty mass required for student research. The department would find it difficult to maintain its contributions to the new Arts and Technology program, a particularly disturbing consequence as CAP endorsed this curricular direction in 2005 with the recommendation of a tenure-track position in Computing Technology and the Arts. Members of the department are a resource for not only Art and Music, as mentioned above, but also for the other sciences (Engineering and the Biological Sciences especially) through required and elective course selections, the Computational Modeling Center, and as consultants for student and faculty research initiatives. The department has undertaken a variety of new initiatives to increase student awareness of its field, and these, along with the move to Ford Hall, will likely reinvigorate student interest. If that proves to be the case, there should be a reconsideration of its staffing needs.

Engineering. Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE. The Engineering Program has been promised a tenth FTE, and had hoped to conduct that search in the next academic year. However, in nearly every 200-level course, its enrollments are down by about one-third over the last three years. Additionally, in the complement of five or six courses offered at the 300-level in a given semester, typically half have enrollments between

three and six students. Comparing numbers of majors and average enrollments to other comparably sized departments, we find the staffing in Engineering is sufficient to fulfill its curricular needs. Our understanding is that a delay in filling the final position would not, in the short term, severely compromise the program's academic integrity or accreditation. Nonetheless, there is concern that in the longer term, particularly after the move to Ford Hall and the presumed further heightening of Engineering's profile, increases in enrollments and/or numbers of majors could overburden faculty. Since the status quo of Engineering will not be affected by the recommended reduction (which is rather the precluding of an immediate further expansion), there will be ample time for the administration to revisit this decision in light of future developments in the program.

English. Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE The English Department has lost 1.5 FTE in recent years, with no replacements. In consequence, its ranks no longer include any Assistant Professors; this keystone department needs a new generation of scholars. Its proposal to replace a June 2008 retirement with a position in the literature of the African diaspora has been approved by previous CAPs. We once more endorse that request, which will begin the renewal of English at the same time that it meets needs in Afro-American Studies. However, the Department is large enough to sustain its popular major even with one fewer position in areas of traditional strength. Accordingly, on condition that English is allowed to search in 2008-2009 for a scholar of the African diaspora, and only on that condition, we recommend that a subsequent departure not be replaced.

Music. Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE. Historically, Music has been one of Smith's strongest and most distinguished departments, both in performance and scholarship, and we note with approval some recent innovations in its program, such as discussion of new tracks through the curriculum and several new courses. We recommend a reduction chiefly because of low enrollment figures. The departmental representatives acknowledged that enrollment issues might dictate a future reduction. They noted, however, that any reduction should be made from among the department's musicologists; Music could simply not be a viable department without a composer among its faculty. We emphatically agree: if the department's current composer should be first to retire, his position *must* be replaced.

Philosophy. Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE. Philosophy makes substantial and wide-ranging contributions to the College. With retirements in other departments, it has assumed responsibility for applied ethics, linguistics, and logic (the latter representing the most heavily enrolled courses in quantitative literacy at Smith), and offers courses in race and ethnicity. Its curriculum is highly interdisciplinary, it offers a high number of first-year seminars, its number of majors has been healthy for some time, and it has been ahead of the curve in incorporating elements of The Smith Design into its curriculum. Nevertheless, Philosophy is one of the departments which has benefited from an addition to its staff, and although there is some concern that the loss of an FTE will diminish its capacity to continue to meet such a broad array of College needs, we are persuaded that Philosophy is strong enough to sustain its program even with an eventual reduction.

Physics. No reduction recommended. While the number of majors in this department fluctuates over time, the average number remains high when compared to national averages for men and women, especially at BA-granting institutions. Enrollment figures for the core courses (115, 117, and 118) remain high, although those for some of the 200- and 300-level offerings can vary. These figures reflect, in large part, the vital connections between the basic physics courses and the needs and requirements of the other sciences, Engineering, and the pre-health curriculum. The members of the department have invested a great deal in curricular revisions, and a strong and innovative lab-based pedagogy has emerged, one that is highly demanding of faculty time and energy. The addition of a 1.0 FTE was made in 2003, but this position has been fully absorbed by the emerging demands of the Engineering Program. We believe that any reduction in staff would seriously compromise the department, particularly its important service component and non-major offerings; therefore, no reduction is recommended.

Russian. Recommended reduction: 1.0 FTE. The Russian Department has distinguished Smith College for six decades. According to the visitors' report on the 2006-2007 decennial review, the current complement of three full-time faculty is the bare minimum to sustain the language and literature major at Smith. Cutting staffing would therefore eliminate the major from the College. It would also put at risk Russian's steady contributions to Comparative Literature. Yet average enrollments in Russian fall off rapidly after the 100-level. In light of student interest and initiatives elsewhere in the Valley, we recommend the creation of a Five-College Russian major, with a hub at Amherst College. It might follow the model of the Five-College Astronomy Department or the Five-College Certificate in International Relations, with a coordinated curriculum guaranteeing places to Smith students in key classes on other campuses. Once such arrangements are in place, we recommend that the next retirement or resignation from Russian not be replaced.

Spanish and Latin American Studies. No reduction recommended. The Spanish and Portuguese Department is the foreign language and culture department with the largest enrollments per class and per faculty FTE. Given that Spanish is the second language of the United States and that Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the population, the department expects to continue to draw students interested in gaining fluency in Spanish and a deeper understanding of Latino and Latin American culture and literature in its complex relation to American culture, history, and politics. The two-semester sequence SPN 260-261 is foundational for both majors with respect to both content and methodology. As such, it offers a new paradigm for thinking critically about globalization. Enrollments in this two-course basis of the major as well as in the capstone seminar for Latin American Studies have consistently been high. Although an anticipated Five College position in the field of Latin American archeology, based in the Department of Anthropology, will further broaden the current offerings in Latin American Studies, the addition of this position will not make up for the loss of the core courses in South American literature and the critical and methodological perspective that they bring to the discipline. Nor can any of the three members of the Spanish and Portuguese Department who specialize in Latin American rather than Iberian culture and literature fill the curricular shortfall. None of them focuses on the perspective that Latin

American literatures and cultures bring to prevailing political and cultural paradigms of interpreting North-South relationships.

Theatre. No reduction recommended. Smith has a unique theatre program, the distinctiveness of which lies in the department's commitment to teaching the art of directing and to giving undergraduates many opportunities to direct. These opportunities for Smith students stem directly from the wealth of directing courses offered and, in particular, from the faculty's readiness to mentor student directors—a time-consuming but essential task. The department also has healthy enrollments—always turning students away from its acting courses—and numbers of majors. At the same time, its faculty has in the last two years lost one acting/directing position and is at risk of losing a second. Moreover, two of its positions in design, formerly tenure-track, have been converted to lecturer status. We are convinced that further reduction in the number of faculty would compromise the curriculum and overburden its remaining tenure-track faculty. In fact, it seems imperative to restore as soon as possible at least one of the acting/directing positions, so that Theatre can maintain its excellence.

The elected members of CAP:

Ernest Benz
Richard Briggs
Alice Hearst
Jefferson Hunter
Cornelia Pearsall
Janie Vanpee, Faculty Council
representative
Doreen Weinberger

Appendix G

To: Members of the Faculty
From: Carol T. Christ
Susan C. Bourque
Re: CAP Report on Reducing the Size of the Faculty
Date: May 12, 2008

We wish to thank the members of the Committee on Academic Priorities for the impressive work that they have done this semester and over the past three years. They have heard the concerns of the faculty and developed a set of recommendations that we believe are in the long term best interests of the College. We also remind ourselves and the faculty that while these reductions will occur when retirements or resignations happen, the future size and distribution of the faculty will always be a subject that needs discussion and consideration in light of changing curricular needs.

In every case of a reduction, both these last eight and the preceding seventeen, we are keenly aware of the difficulties involved. Nevertheless, we are convinced that these reductions can be absorbed without undue damage to the overall strength of the curriculum. Furthermore, we are encouraged by the useful conversations that have occurred across departments and programs as they have considered potential future collaborations with one another as we implement The Smith Design.

We received CAP's recommendations regarding reductions in the faculty on April 11, 2008. The recommendations were discussed with the members of CAP on April 16th and, following that discussion, we met with each of the departments where a recommendation was recommended and with one additional department. With only one exception we have accepted CAP's recommendations.

Regarding the following departments we have accepted CAP's recommendations for reductions which are:

Afro-American Studies	.5
American Studies	.5
Comparative Literature	1
Computer Science	1
English	1
Music	1
Philosophy	1
Russian	1

With respect to the recommendations concerning Engineering and Physics we have decided on the following reductions:

Engineering	.5
Physics	.5

This slight change in the CAP recommendation will allow Physics and Engineering to consider a variety of options for addressing the needs of both majors, either through a future shared position or through greater use of Five College Cooperative opportunities. We believe both departments can sustain this reduction at this time without undue damage to either major.

Appendix H

Liberal Arts Luncheon Presentations – Fall 2007 Lower Level, Smith College Club

September 6	Eric Reeves, Professor of English Language and Literature “A Long Day's Dying: Genocide by Attrition in Darfur”
September 13	Chester Michalik, Professor Emeritus of Art “Conflicts: Photographs of War, Militarism, and Propaganda”
September 20	Cate Rowen, Director of Institutional Research & Educational Assessment “The Latest From U.S. News: Inside the Rankings”
September 27	Kiki Gounaridou, Associate Professor of Theatre “Will in the World: Biographies of Shakespeare”
October 4	Judith Cardell, Clare Boothe Luce Assistant Professor of Computer Engineering “Small is Beautiful: Building a Sustainable Economy through Distributed Energy Resources”
October 11	James Miller, Associate Professor of Economics "Are We Approaching a Technological Singularity? Will Moore's Law Make Our Children Immortal?"
October 18	David Dempsey, Associate Director of Museum Services & William Myers, Chief Preparator, Museum of Art “The Art of the Matter: The Prequel”
October 25	Jonathan Hirsh, Senior Lecturer & Monica Jakuc, Elsie Irwin Sweeney Professor of Music “Inspired by Beethoven: Joan Tower's Piano Concerto”
November 8	Sam Intrator, Associate Professor of Education and Child Study & Donald Siegel, Professor of Exercise and Sports Studies "Project Coach: The story of a Sports- themed Youth and Community Development Program in Springfield"
November 15	Elliot Offner, Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities Emeritus, Art Department "Recent Sculpture as well as a Few Older Works at the Vose Galleries of Boston"
November 29	Maureen Fagan, Assistant Professor of Chemistry “Bugs on Tap: How Bacteria Remove Haloacetic Acids from Drinking Water”
December 6	Nina Antonetti, Assistant Professor of Landscape Studies “William Andrews Nesfield: The First Landscape Architect or Just Another Renaissance Man?”
December 13	Sherrill Redmon/Joyce Follet & Faculty Speakers TBA, Sophia Smith Collections “Mining for Gold in the Sophia Smith Collections”

Presentations sponsored by the Committee on Academic Priorities

Liberal Arts Luncheon Presentations – Spring, 2008
Lower Level, Smith College Club

- January 31 Leslie Hill, Associate Dean for International Study
 “Trends in Study Abroad: Internationalizing the Campus”
- February 14 Daniel Horowitz, Mary Huggins Gamble Professor, American Studies,
 Audrey Smith, Dean of Enrollment, and Debra Shaver, Director of
 Admission
 “Smith Admissions: Trends, Strategies, and the SAT Requirement”
- February 21 Nicolas Russell, Assistant Professor, French Studies
 “Collective Memory’s History in France”
- February 28 Donna Divine, Morningstar Professor, Government and Jewish Studies
 “By the Waters of Babylon: The Middle East in Crisis or Transition?”
- March 6 Marc Lendler, Associate Professor, Government
 “James Madison and the First Amendment”
- March 13 Elizabeth Jamieson, Assistant Professor, Chemistry
 “Chromium, Base Lesions and Unstable DNA”
- March 27 Lawrence Meinert, Professor in Residence, Geology
 “Terroir – Vineyards and Wineries of Argentina (or Some Fulbrights are
 More Fun than Others)”
- April 3 Lale Burk, Senior Lecturer, Chemistry
 “Cross-Cultural Connections: Istanbul to Hamburg”
- April 10 Nalini Bhushan, Professor, Philosophy
 Jay Garfield, Doris Silbert Professor, Philosophy

 “‘Whose Voice? Whose Tongue’ Indian Philosophy in England from
 Renaissance to Independence”
- April 17 Ginetta Candelario, Associate Professor, Sociology
 “‘Learning about Inequality in Holyoke by Sifting through the Trash: A
 Community Based Research Project”
- April 24 Mary Murphy, Senior Lecturer, Mathematics & Statistics
 “Carmen Pampa: A Rural University for Bolivian Campesinos”
- May 1 Tom Riddell, Acting Dean of the College
 “A Year Away from Smith: In Search of a Perfect Image”
 Presentations sponsored by the Committee on Academic Priorities

Appendix I

Faculty Leadership Seminars

Date	Topic	Comments
11/9/07	Understanding the College Budget (Rick Myers)	College Issues
11/16/07	Chico Zimmerman	Teaching – external
2/1/08	Academic Support Services (Lib, JC, QLC, DS)	Teaching – internal
2/29/08	Anti-Racism Commitment (SSW)	Diversity
3/13/08	Diversity & Financial Aid (Audrey Smith)	College Issues