

# BRYN MAWR

## COLLEGE

10 July 2012

Grace Armstrong  
Alison Cook-Sather, Chair of the Committee on Academic Priorities  
Tamara Davis  
Toba Kerson  
Michael Tratner  
Arlo Weil

Dear Alison and CAP colleagues,

Thank you for your superb work this year. The work of the Committee on Academic Priorities is often challenging and complex, and I appreciate the energy and attention each of you gave to the important work of CAP and the College this year. I would particularly like to express my appreciation to Michael Tratner as he completes his service to CAP. Michael's analytic aptitude, his persistent emphasis on institution-wide goals and his dedication to the best that Bryn Mawr can be has been a significant contribution to the work of this committee. This letter constitutes my formal response to CAP's Annual Report to the Faculty, AY 2011-2012, which was released in April, and to the Addendum Report to the Faculty, which was sent to me in May.

### **Recommendations for Faculty Searches**

I am grateful for the prudence with which CAP undertook its assessment of requests for faculty and post-doctoral searches. I support fully CAP's practice of evaluating each request in its relationship to the needs and resources of the sponsoring program and department as well as the short- and long-term priorities of the divisions and College as a whole. This important perspective complements other efforts to think and work trans departmentally to advance the goals of the College. I also appreciate the continued emphasis on structuring position descriptions and recruitment efforts so we may further diversify the faculty.

I approve CAP's recommendation to conduct the following Tenure Track searches at the rank of beginning Assistant Professor: a position in Biology for a scholar of Genomics/Bioinformatics, with an appreciation of how this position will expand the department's range and foster interdepartmental collaboration; a position in East Asian Studies, with the condition that the person teaches language as a regular part of her or his workload; a position in History for someone in the field of Modern European History, with the expectation that the department involve directly other departments at all stages of the search and that the department continue to be leave proof except under unusual circumstances; a position in Philosophy with the requirement that the job posting state that the person be knowledgeable about contemporary empirical research and methodologies and have expertise in cognitive science; and a position in Spanish for a scholar in Latin American

Literature with expertise in cultural, literary, historical, and theoretical issues. Finally, I approve a position in Theater, with the requirement that all candidates be able to originate theater productions and direct plays in the College's small and highly collaborative program and with the recognition that Goodhart is to be actively available to and usable by all campus constituents. It is understood that the person in this new position will teach courses regularly taught, with this coverage resulting in a savings to be applied to the increased staffing in design.

I also approve the recommendation of CAP to conduct the following Continuing Non-Tenure Track searches: a position in French and Francophone Studies for a candidate whose primary responsibility would be the coordination of the first and second years of their intensive language sequence while teaching in both years of the sequence, with the understanding that the department continues to be leave proof except in unusual circumstances; and a position in Russian for someone in Russian language, literature, and culture with a background in linguistics or Second Language Acquisition.

I agree with CAP's decision not to approve specific searches in the departments of Anthropology, Mathematics, and Spanish for two Tenure Track positions and one Continuing Non-Tenure Track position, respectively. Like CAP, I encourage Anthropology to submit next year a revised request after they have an opportunity to undertake a more extensive discussion with colleagues in Archeology. I appreciate the efforts of both departments to understand that balancing our small size with our large academic ambitions calls for creative flexibility. Similarly, I support CAP's direction to Mathematics that it join other departments utilizing statistics to discuss overlapping interests and define a course of action that meets all needs in this area. Lastly, I concur with the determination that Spanish postpone its discussion of a possible position request until data from the implementation of the new language requirement is available, allowing for further evaluation of enrollments and subsequent departmental staffing.

### **Other Issues Addressed by CAP in 2011-2012**

#### *Revisions to the Process of Submitting and Reviewing Position Requests*

Bryn Mawr has benefited greatly from CAP's thorough examination of the processes by which position requests are submitted and reviewed. The committee's creativity, flexibility, and inclusive approach to its review resulted in a successful experiment this year and a protocol we can now follow. I underscore CAP's statement that it will continue to take an institutional perspective in all its work and applaud those programs and departments that have adopted this lens when crafting position requests. As we think more broadly about how each proposal can consider College-wide needs and resources, in addition to those of each program or department, a collegial and mutually promising decision will emerge. I commend CAP for developing a more supportive process that promotes collegiality and collaboration.

Your decision to work closely with the Curriculum Committee at virtually every step of the review process and to invite the participation of others with an investment in the outcome is one I strongly endorse. While such extensive consultation introduces complexity and additional commitments of time and energy, I am encouraged by the advantages this process affords with regard to transparency and collaboration. Additionally, I am pleased to

know that CAP, the Curriculum Committee, and the majority of programs and departments found the process to be a positive and productive one.

Finally, I agree with your recommendation, as described in the Addendum, of a process to follow when faculty lose prematurely a junior tenure-track colleague and seek to replace her or him. As you outlined, this new process will make less onerous the resubmission of an unchanged request and expedite its evaluation, as well as lend itself to greater cooperation when proposing a revised request. I hope that it will also ease concerns about the possible departmental consequences of a negative reappointment review. I anticipate hearing news of its successful implementation.

Thank you once again for your wise counsel to me and your commitment to Bryn Mawr. I found our work this year to be most valuable, and I look forward to continued collaboration next year.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane", with a large, stylized initial "J" that loops back.

Jane McAuliffe  
President

cc: Provost Kim Cassidy