

Committee on Academic Priorities

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BRYN MAWR

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Annual Report to the Faculty 2012-2013

The Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) membership for the 2012-2013 academic year included Alison Cook-Sather (Education, CAP Chair), Penny Armstrong (French and Francophone Studies), Tamara Davis (Biology), Jane Hedley (English), Toba Kerson (Social Work and Social Research), and Arlo Weil (Geology). The Provost attended most CAP meetings by invitation. CAP gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the Provost's Office, with a special thanks to Linda Butler Livesay.

During the Fall semester, CAP met once per week, and in the Spring semester twice per week. In addition to meeting with departments and programs that submitted position requests, we also invited Ellen Stroud, Victor Donnay, and Carol Hager to discuss Environmental Studies and Jennifer Harford Vargas to discuss Latino/a studies. Finally, we met with Haverford's Educational Policy Committee (EPC). As Chair of CAP, Alison Cook-Sather served on the Chair's Advisory Group and represented CAP on the Thinking Forward Group. Penny Armstrong served as a representative to the Board of Trustees.

CAP received six position requests this year and continued to cooperate with Curriculum Committee to review requests and meet with departments/programs. We also approved searches for two postdoctoral fellowships. In this report we present the results of these searches, and we offer our recommendations regarding position requests as well as for timing of searches.

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Through the Consortium for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges a postdoctoral fellow, an art historian, was hired for a two-year appointment into the Italian Department.

The Bucher-Jackson Fellowship in the Sciences was awarded to a soil ecologist for a two-year appointment in the Biology Department and to support Environmental Studies.

Responses to Position Requests

This year CAP reviewed requests for the following: one conversion from an interim to a continuing non-tenure track (CNTT), one conversion of a CNTT to a tenure track, and four tenure track (TT) positions. In reviewing this year's proposals, CAP continued to emphasize the importance of considering the long-term benefits of each request not only to the department or program that requests a position but also to the College as a whole, with the expectation that all departments and programs would consult and collaborate with allied fields both here and at Haverford College as they developed their requests. Last year, CAP developed a new template to both encourage and support this emphasis. All proposals were developed following or through collaboration with other programs and departments. CAP is encouraged by evidence of a shift from the department-centric model through which position requests were developed in the past to a process for conceptualizing and creating position requests that considers both departmental/programmatic and College-wide needs.

CAP examined each position request in terms of its relation to the College's mission and academic priorities, its contributions to short- and long-term departmental and disciplinary directions, its impact on overall faculty resources at Bryn Mawr and in the Bi-Co, including our capacity to respond to sabbatical leaves, opportunities to enhance the diversity of our faculty, the history of previous requests from the department or program to CAP, and in the case of CNTT requests, the established guidelines on the nature of CNTT appointments. The positions recommended in this report do not increase the overall size of the faculty. Rather, they re-establish stability in departments that have lost colleagues or consolidate interim appointments into more stable, ongoing staffing.

One of the position requests that CAP received this year came from a program that also had a member serving on CAP. To avoid a conflict of interest, CAP followed its usual policy of excusing the CAP member whose program's request was being discussed from all discussions of the proposal and from participating in making the recommendation regarding that request.

CAP is scheduled to meet with the Committee on Appointments (CA) on May 6, 2013, after CAP's staffing recommendations have been approved by the Board. At this meeting, we will jointly review and approve advertisements for the approved searches, which will come under the auspices of CA at the end of the academic year. The two committees consider the transmission of information from CAP to CA of critical importance for the search process.

In our solicitation for position requests this year, as in previous years, CAP emphasized that all requests must identify how the position has been defined so as to attract candidates from underrepresented groups. Continuing this commitment to enhancing faculty diversity, we have explicitly asked departments with approved searches to use language in their job ads that will maximize the number of applicants from underrepresented groups in the search pool.

This year the College mounted 13 searches for TT, CNTT, and post-doc positions, and the Committee on Appointments, the support staff, and the faculty who were needed to staff all these searches were overtaxed. In addition to searches for the annual recommended position requests, there are always additional searches because of failed searches or unexpected departures (given the new CAP policy regarding the replacement of junior faculty leaving within their first term of appointment). Next year, we face a similarly large number of searches that have already been approved or are being recommended in this document. We will therefore be recommending that some of these searches be deferred.

In response to CAP's recommendations and our subsequent discussion, President McAuliffe has indicated her agreement (pending budgetary review). At her request, CAP has communicated these decisions to each department and program. As has been the custom, the President will provide a formal response to the CAP Report at a later date. CAP will also provide an addendum to this report that includes issues addressed subsequent to its distribution.

Anthropology

The Anthropology Department requested approval to conduct searches for two tenure-track positions at the assistant professor level in the areas of anthropological archaeology and cultural anthropology. The request for two positions in a single academic year was motivated by the loss of two colleagues; the Anthropology Department's faculty currently consists of two cultural anthropologists, and a recent hire in biological anthropology (starting fall 2013). In order to re-stabilize the Department and to mount a curriculum that fulfills both departmental and College needs, the Department proposes to hire a cultural anthropologist and an anthropological archaeologist. The arguments made by the Department for these requests are based on the following: 1) the enhancement of future curriculum and curricular directions within the Anthropology Department, 2) the integration and enhancement of the current faculty's research by the addition of new faculty members, 3) the further development of linkages to other allied departments in the Tri-Co, 4) the desire to bring the Anthropology Departments staff and curricular coverage in parallel with other Anthropology Departments at comparable institutions, 5) allowing the Anthropology Department to continue to contribute to broader College curriculum (e.g., E-sem and connections with the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archeology), and 6) making the Department leave-proof in most years.

The Anthropology Department requested approval to conduct a search for a tenure-track (TT) assistant professor position in cultural anthropology with a regional specialization in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, or Native North America (that could include indigenous groups in present day Canada and the US, tribal organization, American Indian groups, etc.), areas that currently are unrepresented in their department and underrepresented in the College more generally. CAP and members of the Anthropology Department discussed the need to have diversity in the new hire's regional coverage (e.g., Africa and Latin America), taking into account the current faculty members' area of focus (i.e., Asia). Additionally, as much as possible, there needs to be diversity in research methodology so as to expose students to a broad spectrum of anthropological perspectives. The Department seeks a scholar with an active program of ethnographic field research that addresses a combination of the following topics: 1) political and legal anthropology including sovereignty and citizenship, indigenous peoples-state relations, civil society, and human rights; 2) circulation of ideas, people, technologies, commodities, and capital; and 3) changing labor economies, new forms of exchange and patterns/practices of consumption, and their impact on social structures, kin, family and gender relations, life cycle and concepts of self and personhood.

The Department worked with several other departments and programs to be sure that the new hire in cultural anthropology would address a number of College-wide needs and will complement the offerings of Haverford's Anthropology Department. As evidenced in letters CAP received, this position could support Growth and Structure of Cities, History, Africana Studies, Latin American, Latino and Iberian Peoples and Cultures, and Middle East Studies, depending upon the candidate's geographic area of expertise. Courses taught by this faculty member might also support interdisciplinary majors and concentrations such as International Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Peace, Conflict, and Social Justice Studies, as well as the Digital Humanities Initiative.

In addition, the Anthropology Department requested approval for an archaeological anthropologist who will be an active field worker in New World archaeology. They indicated that the area of research focus for this position would ideally be on an agriculturally based culture in Meso/South America and/or North America, areas that are underrepresented at Bryn Mawr. No such anthropologist exists at Haverford or Swarthmore, and the courses offered by this hire would complement the Haverford curriculum. Research areas of interest would depend on the person's focus, but could include such topics as population growth and its consequences, development of trade and exchange, early colonial encounters, social differentiation and the rise of hierarchical societies, material culture, ethno-history, and the politics of heritage. Having consulted with several other departments and programs about this position, the Department has demonstrated that this position would support and augment work in many curricular areas and would allow the Department to continue its support the Environmental Studies minor. The Department spoke with and received letters of support from its Haverford counterpart, Environmental Studies, Classical and Near Eastern Archeology, Latin American, Latino and Iberian Peoples and Cultures, and Sociology for this position. CAP and members of the Anthropology Department discussed the need to make sure that any new hire was trained in modern field techniques so as to provide training for not only anthropology students but also students from Classical and Near Eastern Archeology. This is specifically related to the teaching of Anthropology 220: Methods and Theory in Archeology.

CAP recommends that the Anthropology Department's position requests for an anthropological archaeologist and a cultural anthropologist be approved at the level of beginning assistant professor for the following reasons:

CAP is particularly impressed with the efforts the Anthropology Department put into their collaborative discussions with other departments in the Bi-Co so that these positions would have the greatest impact on both the Anthropology Department and across the institutions. We were also impressed with the exciting new curricular directions the Department is pursuing, and thought that these new positions would support the Department's efforts and make these changes possible. Moreover, the large numbers of majors and students served by the Anthropology Department make staffing a stable and diverse curriculum an important part of the College's plan, and without these positions it would be impossible for Anthropology to mount a major at the level that is expected at Bryn Mawr. Due to the importance of the anthropological anthropologist position to both the Anthropology and Archeology Departments, a member of the Classical and Near Eastern Archeology Department will be a member of the search committee.

Arabic

The Middle Eastern Studies Initiative (MESI) Steering Committee submitted a request to convert the non-tenure track interim Arabic language teaching position to a continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) position. MESI is the umbrella under which professors from Archeology, Comparative Literature, Art History, Political Science, History, Gender and Sexuality, the Center for International Studies, Judaic Studies, Religion (at HC), and Arabic group their courses and build connections among them. The following interdisciplinary group was involved in conceptualizing and submitting the proposal: D. Harrold (Political Science), A. Seyhan (German and Comparative Literature), A. Walker (History of Art), S. Ullman (History), P. Magee (Archeology), M. Ataç (Archeology), A. Amitai (Hebrew and Judaic Studies), and G. Armstrong (Coordinator, Middle Eastern languages).

The primary reason for this request is provide stability in the staffing of Arabic language courses at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, which would better ensure excellent language and cultural instruction in the first two years of Arabic (third year Arabic language is taught at Swarthmore). The responsibilities for the individual in the CNTT position would be the same as those of the interim, such that this person would teach Elementary and Intermediate Arabic, including some drill sessions, on all three campuses, although Bryn Mawr and Haverford would be the home base. The CNTT would also be responsible for developing the syllabus and exams, communicating lesson plans, etc. to the drill instructor, and organizing events highlighting Arabic culture. It is expected that the CNTT would be a member of the MESI Steering Committee.

CAP, the CC representative, and representatives from MESI discussed the need to stabilize the staffing of first and second year Arabic language in order to provide high-quality instruction. Since the primary need at this time is in Elementary and Intermediate Arabic language instruction, a CNTT is a more appropriate position than a TT. Discussion was had regarding how to make this position attractive to potential applicants, potentially via the opportunity to take on a leadership role as the convener of MESI and/or the director of Arabic. In addition, the possibility of continuing to develop the relationship with colleagues at Swarthmore College is a positive aspect of the position. There was also discussion regarding the fact that since the CNTT would not be housed in a department, it was not clear to whom this person would report or who would be evaluating this person's performance for reappointment. It was suggested that this individual might be offered a "home" in another department, possibly another language department to which this person has connections, or in Comparative Literature, and it would be appropriate for colleagues at Swarthmore to participate in reviews for reappointment.

As the costs associated with this position are shared equally by Bryn Mawr and Haverford, CAP met with Haverford's EPC. Members of EPC and the Haverford Provost have affirmed their support for this position.

CAP recommends that the MESI Steering Committee's request to convert the non-tenure track interim Arabic language teaching position to a continuing non-tenure track slot be approved at this time for the following reasons:

We agree with the MESI Steering Committee that the College needs a full-time, continuing Arabic language position to provide the staffing stability that excellent pedagogy requires. It has been difficult to find Arabic instructors who would accept interim positions. In light of this, the current global geopolitical climate and high student interest warrant a more firmly established position to offer students a program that ensures they will be as competitive as possible after graduation.

Growth and Structure of Cities

The Growth and Structure of Cities Department requested approval to conduct a search for a tenure-track (TT) position at the assistant professor level. In order to balance expertise in the Department and to mount its integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum, the Department proposed to search for a social scientist specializing in urbanism and urban social change and tensions, with a preference for a candidate whose research focuses on cities in the Global South. The position request was based on the following: 1) beginning next year the Cities Department will have only one social scientist specializing in the built environment, which would preclude providing the multi-disciplinary curriculum on which the Cities major is founded, 2) a strong foundation in social science research

methodologies applied to urban culture and societies is fundamental to the mission of the Department, 3) the Cities Department serves a large number of majors and non-majors, 4) the desire to expand on the geographic areas of expertise here and in the Bi-Co, 5) the Department wants to provide stability and staffing for the senior capstone seminar and thesis advising, and 6) to fill broadly recognized college-wide gaps in the systematic analysis of cities in the Global South.

CAP, the Curriculum Committee representative, and members of the Growth and Structure of Cities Department discussed the increasing importance of quantitative skills to their curriculum. Thus, it was agreed that any new social science position in the Cities Department would develop elective courses that would fulfill the College's quantitative (Q) requirement, drawing on the quantitative research methodologies of the successful candidate. Such courses would support both Cities majors and minors as well as other students interested in the field of Cities and thus relieve enrollment pressure on other departments. CAP and members of the Cities Department further discussed the particular area of focus within the Global South that would best serve the students in the Cities program as well as the broader curricular coverage across the College. The Cities Department argued that their priorities were for a scholar whose research, teaching, and commitments were in the regions of Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East to best fit departmental needs as well as student and faculty interest in the Bi-Co. While these regions are all underrepresented in the curriculum, CAP thinks that Africa and the Middle East are the areas of greatest need.

CAP recommends that the Growth and Structure of Cities Department's position request for a social scientist that deals with the built environment in the Global South be approved at the level of beginning assistant professor for the following reasons:

CAP recommends the approval of a search for a tenure-track (TT) position in the social sciences with a specialty in urbanism and urban social change and tensions in the Global South, with a preference for a scholar focused on Africa and/or the Middle East. CAP understands the large number of students served by the Cities Department and the need to expose their students to both a social science and historical perspectives on the complex societal relationship to urban form and community structure. This position will balance the Department's current expertise and curricular coverage, resulting in three historians and two social scientists. This hire will position the Cities Department well to continue their collaborate work, in and outside of the classroom, with colleagues in other departments on campus and in the Bi-Co. With this position, Cities will be leave proof under most circumstances.

Mathematics

The Mathematics Department requested approval to search for a tenure-track (TT) position in applied math, with a focus in computational methods. The Math Department, which currently consists of six tenure-track, two CNTT faculty members, and interim faculty as needed, experiences high enrollments and a large number of majors. Students taking math courses are increasingly interested in applications of math. The Math Department talked to faculty in many other departments to see what type of applied math courses might be valuable to their students, and computational modeling was mentioned frequently as a need. Therefore, Math's goals in requesting this position are multi-fold: to provide additional staffing for the core course offerings in the math major, to allow the Math Department to offer applied math courses on a more regular basis and to provide courses in computational modeling that would be available to students both in and outside of the math major.

CAP, the CC representative, and members of the Math Department discussed whether hiring an applied mathematician would both satisfy the staffing needs to accommodate the large number of students enrolled in math classes and offer additional courses that are accessible to non-math majors in computational modeling, and whether it is possible to re-envision the math curriculum to alleviate some of the staffing pressures in order to become leave-proof. The Math Department has modeled a staffing plan that will allow them to be leave-proof if they reduce the number of sections of Math 101 (Calculus I) from four to three, of Math 201 (Multivariable Calculus) and Math 203 (Linear Algebra) from three to two, and of Math 301 (Real Analysis I) and Math 303 (Abstract Algebra I) from a total of four sections to a total of three, despite the fact that they will be adding an additional section of Math 206: Transitions to Higher Math in order to fulfill the new discipline-specific writing requirement. The Math Department also indicated that they plan to offer all sections of Multivariable Calculus and Linear Algebra with a more applied math focus.

The conversation about computational methods courses that would be accessible to students outside the Math Department included discussion regarding the 200-level computational methods course that is on the books, and that this course should be designed in such a way to address the needs of students in a variety of science majors; this course is currently cross-listed in Biology, Geology, and Computer Science. In their staffing plan, the Math Department includes a 200-level computational methods course that would be accessible to students who have completed Calculus 101 and 102, as well as a 300-level computational course that would be offered every other year. The group also discussed the requirements for this position to ensure that candidates would indeed have expertise in an applied area of mathematics, and the Math Department responded with a list of criteria that would provide evidence for the use of applied mathematics in candidate's scholarly work. We note in this connection that Biology plans to search for a computationally based position next year.

CAP recommends that this position request be approved subject to the understanding that the new position would leave proof the department, but that the search be deferred for one year.

Given the College's current resources, the recently mandated cuts in departments and programs as well as the continuing needs of other departments, CAP decided to treat the Mathematics Department's request as an opportunity to transform existing interim staffing into a tenure-track position. Thus, this position is recommended as a replacement for all interim staffing in the Mathematics Department and carries with it the commitment to serve wider departmental and programmatic needs. The Department has modeled a staffing plan (with all courses and instructors included) that requires no interims for six years (and will continue to require no interims) and that will serve as a form of contract.

It is clear that trading interims for a tenure line comes at a cost that needs to be weighed carefully against the value of this position to the College and to the requesting department. Our discussions with the Math Department were extensive. The issues are so complex that we recommend deferring this search so that the Department can take another year to decide whether a new TT line and no interims would work better for them, or whether they would rather continue with their current staffing. In this way, Biology's pending search for a computational ecologist can also be taken into account.

If the Department decides to search for this position as described, the successful applicant would meet the following three requirements:

- The candidate can teach a variety of courses that are part of the core offerings of the Department;

- As part of his or her research, the candidate will engage in some aspect of computational work and will be able to teach courses in computational modeling.
- The candidate's work is of an applied nature as evidenced by meeting at least three out of the following criteria:
 - An established record of significant interaction with researchers/practitioners outside of mathematics or a clear willingness and intention to engage in such work;
 - Advanced coursework in fields outside of mathematics;
 - The use of data in his or her work;
 - A strong link between his or her work and applied problems.
 - Other evidence of a clear and compelling nature that their work is applied.

In addition, if the Department decides to search for this position as described, outside members on the search would include one from social sciences and two chosen from Physics, Geology, Computer Science, and/or Chemistry.

Psychology

The Psychology Department requested approval to convert the department's CNTT laboratory coordinator position to a tenure-track (TT) position for a beginning assistant professor of health psychology. The department would seek candidates whose approach to studying human health and disease is one that bridges the biological, behavioral and social sciences. This request emerges from the Department's effort to re-think its undergraduate curriculum in anticipation of the closing of the graduate program in Psychology and in light of a recent external review.

As the graduate program in Psychology is phased out, there will no longer be graduate teaching assistants to run the labs for Introductory Psychology and some of the 200-level courses. Going forward, the department therefore plans to discontinue offering labs in connection with the introductory course—a change that will eliminate the need for a CNTT lab coordinator with primary responsibility for oversight of those labs and training of the graduate teaching assistants. Instead, six small, hands-on, half-credit labs will be offered each year at the 200-level. After looking carefully at what would be entailed in the new half-credit labs, the Department concluded that each faculty member would take responsibility for teaching a lab course in his or her specialty area. This is one of a number of curricular changes the Department has recently made with an eye to the enhancement of student research training, including a one-semester Junior Seminar and a required senior capstone experience.

CAP recommends that the Psychology Department's position request be approved, for the following reasons:

The request to convert a long-standing CNTT position to tenure-track does not represent an increase in the size of the Psychology Department. Nonetheless, it will improve the Department's capacity to be staffed against leaves, as attested in the five-year staffing plan that was submitted with the position request. The Department further anticipates that with a relatively modest budget, \$2,500, the research space in Bettws y Coed that is currently being used by the CNTT lab coordinator can be successfully renovated for this new member's use.

CAP finds the re-structuring of the Department's laboratory offerings on which the request is based to be a well thought out response to the closing of the graduate program, one that is in keeping with the recommendations of the external review committee which reviewed the departments at both colleges in 2012. The downside we see, but which seems unavoidable, is that Introductory Psychology will no longer afford a laboratory experience for students seeking to use it to meet the distributional requirement in Scientific Inquiry.

The Haverford department strongly supports the department's position request, and supporting letters from other departments and programs affirm that the proposed position stands to benefit not only the Psychology Department and its majors but also the undergraduate curriculum as a whole. An additional consideration in favor of searching for a new tenure-track member at this juncture in this department is the likelihood that as many as four of its senior members will be retiring over the next decade; a new health psychologist, if hired next year, could be expected to be a full participant in the re-thinking of departmental priorities that will inevitably take place in light of those retirements. CAP therefore recommends approval of a search next year for a tenure-track (TT) position in health psychology at the beginning assistant professor level.

Summary of Recommendations:

As indicated in the opening of this report, because of the unusually large number of searches already approved or recommended this year, and the extraordinary demand so many searches puts on colleagues and staff, we recommend that some of these approved searches proceed during the 2013-2014 academic year and some searches be deferred until the 2014-2015 academic year:

We recommend that the following searches be conducted in 2013-2014:

- The Anthropology Department's search for an anthropological archaeologist and for a cultural anthropologist
- The Biology Department's search for a computational ecologist
- MESI's search for a CNIT in Arabic language instruction
- The Economics Department's search for a senior assistant professor and for a beginning assistant professor
- The Growth and Structure of Cities Department's search for a social scientist who specializes in the built environment in the Global South
- Political Science search for a colleague in ancient political theory with a secondary specialization in either modern or contemporary political thought.
- The Russian Department's search for a CNIT in Russian language instruction
- The Psychology Department's search for a health psychologist

We recommend that the following searches be conducted in 2014-2015:

- The Mathematics Department's search for an applied mathematician
- The Physics Department's search for a beginning assistant professor
- The Theater Program's search for a beginning assistant professor