

BRYN MAWR

COLLEGE

June 28, 2021

Michael Allen
Penny Armstrong
Don Barber
Radcliffe Edmonds
Jamie Taylor
Dianna Xu, Chair

Dear Dianna and CAP colleagues,

Thank you for CAP's 2020-2021 annual report and for the thoughtful work that the Committee carried out this year. CAP must take a strategic approach to addressing academic priorities, keeping in mind fiscal constraints, opportunities for collaboration within the College and with our Tri-College partners, and the necessity of balancing needs of existing and emerging programs. This year's report reflects the care with which CAP assessed institutional opportunities and limits and carried out its responsibilities for assessing position proposals and helping to shape the faculty and the curriculum. I commend committee members for building the trust and sense of community necessary to fulfill your mandate even as you were required to work remotely due to the pandemic.

I am grateful to Dianna for her leadership of the committee this year, and for her service on the Faculty Chair's Advisory Council and as a faculty representative to the Board of Trustees. Penny Armstrong will take on leadership of the Committee in 2021-2022 as Michael Allen begins his two-year term as Associate Provost. I thank Michael for his thoughtful contributions to CAP over the past two years, and I am grateful to Penny for her willingness to assume the role of CAP chair and to continue her exceptional commitment to service on behalf of the faculty and the College as a whole. I also thank Penny for her participation as CAP's representative to the College Budget Committee over the past year and Rad Edmonds for his continued contributions to the Strategic Advisory Group. The Committee's work benefited from Don Barber's return after his spring 2020 sabbatical. Finally, I want to express my appreciation to all CAP members for your participation in the College's successful Middle States reaccreditation process, including the November 2020 site visit.

Reflections on CAP's Mission and Goals

In a year in which the College and all of higher education faced extraordinary financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, CAP reflected deeply on budgetary and other institutional resource constraints that the Committee and the College as a whole must consider as it carries out its academic mission and responds to emerging priorities.

As CAP notes, Bryn Mawr's careful financial management meant that unlike most of its peers, the College was able to support its existing faculty and staff without pandemic-related layoffs, to sustain benefits, and to move forward with faculty searches during 2020-2021. But as CAP also notes, the pandemic also required the College to make changes in its budget model and the Committee to deepen its understanding of institutional finances. Working with CFO Kari Fazio and leaders of the Board of Trustees' Finance Committee, I will continue to create opportunities for CAP members, other faculty leaders, and the faculty as a whole to understand College budgets and financial forecasts.

I am grateful to the Committee for its clear-eyed understanding that the faculty cannot be expanded indefinitely, and that continued growth is not sustainable given that enrollment is relatively fixed and the student-faculty ratio is already exceptionally low. As I wrote last year, I support CAP's position that no faculty position will be automatically replaced, as well as the Committee's requirement that departments think about position requests within the contexts of their own field, academic priorities of the College as a whole, and the ongoing evolution of liberal arts education. It is necessary that CAP and departments continue to work collaboratively to support both departmental curricula and new academic fields and priorities. Operating within these constraints presents a variety of challenges. Moving forward successfully will require creativity and new ways of thinking about resources, potentially new ways of thinking about timeframes for available positions, and opportunities offered through our Tri-College partnerships.

CAP Processes

I supported the changes in procedures for requesting tenure-track and continuing non-tenure track lines that were put in place in 2019 intended to streamline work while preserving transparency and opportunities for dialogue. I am optimistic that the additional modifications that CAP has made for 2021-2022 will help achieve these goals more fully.

I am also keenly aware of the ways in which CAP held front and center the College's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as CAP conducted its deliberations. I know that moving forward, CAP will continue to examine its processes and decision-making in light of these commitments.

Search Deferrals

In my reply to CAP's 2019-2020 report, I expressed a number of concerns about the decision to defer faculty searches, including the impact on departments' ability to offer their curriculum to majors and other students. As CAP points out, the College now has a backlog of six deferred searches (four due to the choice to defer and two unsuccessful searches) as well as four new searches approved for 2021-2022. In its report, CAP states that some of these new searches will "inevitably be deferred." I do not believe that deferrals are inevitable or advisable, as this course of action perpetuates the problems that caused me concern last year. As I suggested in 2020, some changes to streamline our current faculty search process have the potential to reduce time demands on the faculty and the Provost and thus to make it easier to conduct these searches. While conducting

many searches in one year poses some challenges, it is also the case that departments have submitted requests and CAP has approved those requests because of compelling curricular and staffing needs. I am glad to have learned that only two departments have chosen to defer approved searches.

Reflections on the Bi-College (and Tri-College) Relationship

The changes in Haverford's structure and schedule for reviewing and approving faculty searches will make it possible for Bryn Mawr and Haverford faculty to engage in more productive consultation and collaboration. I am grateful to CAP for its work with Haverford's Faculty Affairs and Planning Committee to achieve this long-desired goal, and I look forward to realizing the possibilities of more effective planning and new synergies between CAP and Haverford's new SCPC.

I also want to comment on CAP's experience this year in addressing the Tri-Co Linguistics program's position request. While the Department has come forward with multiple requests for positions, CAP's decision is consistent with the College's commitment in the 2012 MOU that established the TriCo program and that outlined the resources to be provided by each college. The 2019-2020 Memorandum of Understanding signed by CAP, Haverford's Education Policy Committee, and Swarthmore's Council on Educational Policy (CEP) provided a crucial framework for responding to the request and for carrying out the productive but sometimes difficult work of curricular collaboration. I am hopeful that this case will serve as a useful reminder to all relevant committees—CAP, CEP, and Haverford's new SCPC—of the commitment to consultation and communication articulated in the MOU and the importance of following the MOU at moments of decision-making, and I am glad to know that the Provosts have also conferred about the importance of adhering to the processes and commitments outlined in the MOU.

Faculty Positions at the College

In evaluating position requests this year, CAP was comprehensive in its consideration of a range of institutional priorities. I appreciate the Committee's efforts to act on a broad understanding of the needs of the College now and in the future. The Committee's recommendations also demonstrate its willingness to make difficult decisions based on its understanding that the College must offer its programs with the existing number of faculty and the very occasional additional position made possible by a significant philanthropic gift.

I appreciate CAP's decision to welcome proposals from any department or program for the second International Studies position funded by the bequest of Isabel Benham '31. This decision reflects the College's commitment to global perspectives in scholarship across the curriculum, supports interdisciplinary programs, and has the potential to foster additional multi-disciplinary collaboration.

The College's pre- and post-doctoral searches generated exciting proposals from multiple departments. I look forward to welcoming our new Consortium for Faculty Diversity

Fellow in Classics in the fall. I regret that the search for a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Africana Studies was not successful, but I am hopeful that the renewed search in fall 2021 will bring an exciting scholar to the campus community.

I approve CAP's recommendations to conduct the following tenure-track searches at the rank of Assistant Professor:

- A position in Biology, for a scholar in neuroscience. An appointment in neuroscience is critical to the department in the wake of the retirements of Peter Brodfuehrer and Karen Greif, as well as to the new Bi-Co Neuroscience major. While this person's specific area of expertise may well contribute to the other disciplines noted by CAP, the needs of biology and neuroscience will be paramount. I join CAP in hoping that successful hires in genomics and neuroscience will provide stable faculty resources for the Biology Department.
- A position in Dance, representing a conversion of a CNTT position to the level of Assistant Professor. This decision to approve conversion of the position in Dance to a tenure-track line is informed by the 2018 External Review and is supported by student interest. The current period of significant transition in the program offers an opportunity both to build upon the foundation laid by two long-serving artist-scholars and to imagine the future of the program. I strongly encourage the hiring process be informed by conversations with colleagues from the BiCollege Arts Program and with Swarthmore's Dance Program. I concur with CAP about the importance of timing this hire, and I underscore the need for faculty to be strategic in managing the program's commitments to teaching and visiting artists.
- A position in Mathematics, in principle, for a scholar in statistics. The addition of a faculty member specializing in statistics will address needs of the department and the new minor in Data Science, and will respond to college-wide student interest. However, since there is currently no vacant tenure line in Mathematics, the institution cannot go forward with this search. I encourage CAP to continue to consult with Mathematics, the Director of Data Science, and the Provost in the development of a sustainable plan to meet this need.
- A position in Middle Eastern Studies (to be known in the future as Middle Eastern and North African Studies), for a scholar of Middle Eastern history in the international arena, that will also serve the curricular and research interests of International Studies. A tenure-track appointment in Middle Eastern/ MENA Studies is critical to offering coherent advising and coursework to the growing number of students interested in this field and will enrich the International Studies major. I encourage faculty affiliated with MENA and with International Studies to work with the Provost to develop an MOU for this new position which spells out the responsibilities of the successful candidate to both programs, and to consider ways to support the success of this junior faculty member, as this individual will have

significant responsibility for a program while still establishing themselves as a scholar and teacher.

- A position in Sociology, in the areas of economic sociology, networks, organizations, and/ or law. I concur that the subfields identified in the position proposal are critical fields in the discipline and of interest to students outside of the major. Sociology has not had full staffing for a sustained period of time, and the addition of a new tenure-track colleague will contribute positively to the life of the department.

I close by again thanking the members of CAP for the time and care they devoted to the Committee's work this year, and for the productive work they accomplished in spite of challenges posed by the pandemic. CAP's deeply thoughtful work to collaborate with departments/programs and with the Administration is critical to supporting the continuing academic excellence of the College. Tim Harte and I look forward to our continuing work together to respond to academic priorities and shape the future of Bryn Mawr.

With appreciation and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kimberly W. Cassidy".

Kimberly W. Cassidy
President