

Committee on Academic Priorities

Chemistry, 2015-16 ÷ 2018-19, Chair 2018 -19

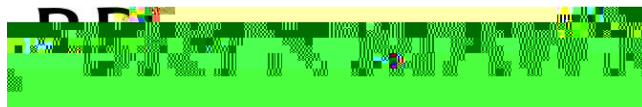
Russian, 2015-16 ÷ 2018-19

Biology, 2017-18 ÷ 2018-19

, English, 2017-18 ÷ 2020-21

, Computer Science, 2017-18 ÷ 2020-21

Political Science and International Studies, 2018-19 ÷ 2021-22



April 10, 2019

Annual Report to the Faculty 2018-2019

The 2018-19 Committee on Academic Priorities membership consisted of Jonas Goldsmith (Chemistry, CAP Chair), Tim Harte (Russian), Tamara Davis (Biology), Jamie Taylor (English), Dianna Xu (Computer Science), and Michael Allen (Political Science and International Studies). The Provost attended most CAP meetings by invitation. CAP is grateful for the administrative and clerical support provided by the Provost's Office, and the committee especially thanks Linda Butler Livesay for setting up meetings with departments, curating our Moodle website, and keeping us on track.

This year CAP met once per week in each semester. In addition to meeting with departments and programs to discuss their position requests, CAP also met with Curriculum Committee (CC) and Haverford's Educational Policy Committee (EPC). As Chair of CAP, Jonas Goldsmith served on the Advisory Council of the Faculty, served as CAP's representative to the Strategic Advisory Group and was CAP's representative to the Board of Trustees. Tim Harte served as CAP's representative to the College Budget Committee. Members of CAP also participated in an external consultation for the Arts Program in Dance, an external review of the Education Program, the Middle States reaccreditation process, an external review of the Mathematics Department, an external review of the Africana Studies Program and post-external review discussions with the Departments of French and Francophone Studies at Bryn Mawr and Haverford.

Although a major portion of CAP's work is to meet with programs and to make recommendations about their proposals for faculty positions, CAP also engaged in other efforts during the 2018-19 academic year. Some of these efforts focused on the continuation of work from previous years and some represented new directions taken. Prior to communicating our recommendations about position proposals, we report on our discussions about these other efforts.

According to the by-laws of the faculty of Bryn Mawr College, the Committee on Academic Priorities is charged to:

consider all matters concerning academic priorities, including, but not limited to, staffing allocations, department and program facilities and resources, restructuring or terminating existing departments and programs (insofar as these have significant resource implications), and other resources relating to teaching and research.

Although additional resources have been brought to the College in the last few years (two new faculty lines in International Studies, one new faculty line in Environmental Studies, one new faculty line in STEM and one forthcoming faculty line in Data Science), we are largely in a zero-growth environment, which means that the resources to do something new—or to expand a department or program—requires curtailment of something we currently do. A reluctance to prune means that we sometimes rely on unsustainable faculty effort as the primary resource to pursue innovative goals. We could cease trying to innovate and evolve, though the likely long-term consequence of that would be the gradual decline of the institution. Alternatively we could commit to the taxing work of cutting back resources to select areas in order to let other areas flourish and to provide the wherewithal for new growth.

In its work, CAP strives towards a consultative and holistic approach, taking into account factors

In addition to what is described above, CAP's strategic approach may also include the making of recommendations about faculty lines for which a proposal to CAP has not been submitted. Similarly, CAP might recommend, prior to a retirement being announced, that a department or program shrink upon the next retirement of a faculty member. CAP recognizes the impact that such recommendations could have on a department/program and its curriculum and would make these recommendations only following thoughtful conversations with the president, provost and department/program in question. CAP expects that the College will provide support to any department/program undergoing such a transition.

For example, this academic year, CAP encountered a situation in which the strategic reallocation of resources was deemed necessary. The Department of Computer Science has experienced a significant and sustained increase in student demand and their staffing is simply not capable of meeting the need. Students are consistently lotteried out of introductory courses in Computer Science and that is unacceptable from the standpoint of faculty, students, parents, alumnae and administrators. Computer Science requested a new faculty line (see below), a continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) faculty member to support its introductory curriculum. In order to be able to recommend such an expansion of the Computer Science faculty, however, CAP needed to identify the resources to support it. CAP considered all unfilled positions for such a reallocation, including

for the Middle Eastern Studies Program to search for a CFD postdoctoral fellow in the area of Middle Eastern History. It is expected that each of the three individuals hired will, at some point during their time at Bryn Mawr, give a public seminar on their scholarly work.

New CAP Processes

The current process for requesting tenure-track (TT) and continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) faculty lines developed over several years, with the goal of making CAP's recommendation process as transparent as possible and ensuring that departments had every opportunity to

New Timeline For Requesting TT and CNTT Lines (to begin Fall 2019)

October (just before Fall Break): Letter of intent (no more than 2 pages) sent to CAP. CAP will respond briefly to the letters of intent.

November (just after Thanksgiving): Proposals to CAP due

December: CAP sends departments a set of questions, agenda topics, etc. that will structure the spring meeting with CAP

Spring semester: CAP meets with departments

March/April: CAP provides recommendations to President and Board

April: CAP submits its annual report to the faculty. President and Board make final decisions

Proposals for Faculty Positions Received by CAP

In September of 2018 CAP put out a call for letters of intent from departments, programs and groups interested in requesting a faculty position. We received the following letters of intent:

- Biology, requesting a TT faculty position in physiology
- Classical and Near Eastern Archeology and Greek, Latin and Classical Studies, jointly requesting a TT faculty position in Roman archeology
- Computer Science, requesting a CNTT faculty position to support the introductory portion of the computer science curriculum
- Creative Writing, requesting a TT faculty position in narrative medicine
- Economics, requesting two TT faculty positions, one in development economics and the other in applied microeconomics
- Education, requesting two TT faculty positions, one focusing on urban education and the other on access to education
- English, requesting a TT faculty position in film studies
- French and Francophone Studies, requesting a TT faculty position in 20th/21st century French and Francophone studies
- German and German Studies, requesting a TT faculty position in German language and literature
- Middle Eastern Studies, requesting a TT faculty position in Middle Eastern history
- Philosophy, requesting a TT position in an area of philosophy that complements current strengths (i.e., an open search).
- Psychology, requesting a TT position in social psychology
- Sociology, requesting a TT position in the sociology of race

In addition to these letters of intent, CAP considered two proposals out of sync with the normal timeline. First, in September 2018, CAP received a full proposal from Computer Science for a TT faculty position in core areas of computer science. We considered this proposal on an expedited basis, without the intermediate step of a listening meeting, making our recommendation to President Cassidy at the end of September. More detail can be found in the section of the report that describes CAP's recommendations. Second, at the end of the 2017-18

academic year, CAP recommended that the Arts Program in Dance should not be approved to hire a TT faculty member. CAP recommended:

that the Provost and the Arts Program in Dance convene a small-scale consultation team in early Fall 2018 so as to create a strong, sustainable vision for the program and in the Bi-Co. Following this consultation, CAP expects Dance to come back quickly with an updated position request that incorporates the recommendations and new directions/changes, to be reviewed on an expedited timeline.

This review process occurred in September 2018 and the Arts Program in Dance subsequently submitted a revised proposal to CAP. We considered this proposal on an expedited basis, again without a listening meeting, making our recommendation to President Cassidy in December. More detail can be found in the section of the report that describes CAP's recommendations.

CAP offered to hold listening meetings with each department/program that submitted a letter of intent. Listening meetings were held with all of the groups mentioned above except: Classical and Near Eastern Archeology and Greek, Latin and Classical Studies, French and Francophone Studies and Sociology, all of whom decided that they were not going to submit a proposal to CAP this year. Subsequent to listening meetings, Creative Writing, English, German and German Studies and Middle Eastern Studies also decided that they were not going to submit a proposal to CAP this year.

In all, for the 2018-19 academic year, CAP received full proposals from:

- Biology, requesting a TT faculty position in physiology
- Computer Science, requesting a TT faculty position in core areas of computer science (to be considered on an expedited basis)
- Computer Science, requesting a CNTT faculty position to support the introductory portion of the computer science curriculum
- Arts Program in Dance, requesting a TT faculty position in dance & dance studies (to be considered on an expedited basis)
- Economics, requesting two TT faculty positions, one in development economics and the other in applied microeconomics
- Education, requesting two TT faculty positions, one focusing on urban education and the other on access to education
- Philosophy, requesting a TT position in an area of philosophy that complements current strengths (i.e., an open search).
- Psychology, requesting a TT position in social psychology

& § 3 ¶ 6 Recommendations on Proposals for Faculty Positions

In academic year 2018-2019 CAP, in fulfilling one of its core functions, considered eight full proposals totaling

how each proposal would affect the College's resources, and how filling a position, or not, might foster or delay increased diversity. In cases where proposals came from departments with

CAP recommends H Q G V W K D W W K H & R P S X W H U 6 F L H O continuing and U W P H Q W & tenure track position be approved for the following reasons:

CAP feels that it is especially unfortunate that at a women's college, students are being turned away from computer science because of a lack of capacity. Although this CNTT position may not be a complete panacea for the Computer Science Department and its enrollment pressures, CAP believes that this new position will allow them both to improve access to the introductory curriculum and to provide more robust and consistent offerings to their majors and minors.

This recommendation constitutes an expansion of the continuing faculty of Computer Science from 4 TT lines to 4 TT lines plus 1 CNTT line. As no new resources are available for this additional line (funds from the Data Science gift cannot be utilized for this CNTT position), it is CAP's responsibility to shift resources from elsewhere to enable this expansion of Computer Science. As described above, CAP's recommendation is that the resources made available by the retirement of a member of the German and German Studies department be used to support the CNTT position in Computer Science.

Arts Program in Dance (Recommendation made December 2018)

The Arts Program in Dance submitted a request for a tenure-track (TT) position for a dance scholar-artist to begin in Fall 2019. This request came after Dance requested a TT position in 2017- 2018. At that time, CAP suggested the Dance Program undergo an external review first to provide guidance as to how Dance might build on its strengths and shape itself for the future. That external review was completed in September 2018, and the report endorsed the structure and aims of the Dance Program and supported a TT request. Bryn Mawr's Dance Program provides all composition, performance, and technique dance courses in the Bi-Co, and it serves a significant number of students, providing dance studies courses that form the academic core of the independent major and minor in Dance as well as courses geared toward the general Bi-Co population. As is typical in comparable programs, the Dance Program regularly hires contingent faculty from the area to teach technique courses, with standing faculty teaching the Program's gateway course as well as other specialized courses in dance studies and performance. The proposed TT position would provide at least two dance studies courses per year that could serve dance majors and minors. These offerings, as well as other, more specialized courses that could be provided, would emerge from the faculty's expertise and interests. Faculty in the Dance program have a long history of contributing to the College-wide curriculum in a number of ways and this new faculty member would most likely carry on this tradition. The Dance Program proposes to keep their search open with respect to field and specialization to ensure that the pool of applicants is as diverse as possible. Consequently, the topics and foci of the courses taught by the new hire, as well as potential directions for the future of the program, would emerge from their area(s) of interest and expertise.

CAP recommends that the Arts Program in Dance request for a tenure-track position be approved at the level of Assistant Professor for the following reasons:

In considering this proposal, CAP discussed ways in which the diverse staffing needs of the Dance Program could be configured and strongly affirms the need for a TT faculty member to

Psychology

The Department of Psychology requested approval for a tenure-track (TT) position in social psychology. Psychology emphasized that its need for this position is due to the significant enrollment pressures that exist throughout its curriculum. The Psychology Department has undergone a major turnover in its staffing during the past 6 years, staggering new hires in different sub-disciplinary fields in order to maintain a diverse curriculum.

The Psychology Department specifically requested to search in the area of social psychology as it is the second largest subfield in the psychological sciences. In addition, given that the field of social psychology focuses on how social processes influence human thoughts and behaviors, a social psychologist has the potential to connect to a variety of other programs at the College. Bryn Mawr's Psychology Department has been without a TT specialist in social psychology since 2015. While the Haverford Psychology Department has a social psychologist, the courses offered by one social psychologist do not meet enrollment demands for this critical area of study. Indeed, over the past few years, an interim member of the Bryn Mawr Psychology Department has taught courses in social psychology. The Psychology Department intends to conduct an open search for a social psychologist in order to attract a diverse applicant pool.

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social psychology be approved at the level of Assistant Professor, for the following reasons:

Historically, Psychology has been staffed at 8 FTEs; however, staffing by continuing members of the faculty has been below the historical average since Kim Cassidy moved into an administrative role at the College. It is also the case that she has just been renewed for second 5-year term as president.