

## **Report of the Chair of the Faculty, 1999-2000**

### **Introduction**

It has again been an eventful year for the faculty. I think the most delightful event was the September 23-25 celebration surrounding the dedication of the Bucksbaum Center for the Arts. Performances, displays, and demonstrations, many by current students and alumni, filled the weekend, and the inaugural show in the Faulconer Art Gallery, *Re-Structure*, was, not to exaggerate, fabulous. High points were outdoor concerts in Haight Courtyard by Herbie Hancock '60 and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra with Dianne Reeves and Joe Lovano. This year also saw the third round of the Fund for Excellence in which the focus was on a more limited number of proposals, although funding of initiatives from the first two rounds—such as the Art Gallery, the Center for Prairie Studies, and the capstone experiment—continued. In this report, I return to issues I brought up last year and introduce some new ones.

### **Faculty Governance**

I begin, as I did last year, with the issue of faculty governance, because I see this as a primary concern of the faculty. In last year's report, I urged each of you to consider an important part of your life here to be reasonable involvement in our self-governance of the curriculum and of those who teach in it and in our shared governance of the College. I think that faculty governance does exist at Grinnell: we really do both govern ourselves and share with the administration the governing of the institution. I also think that this governance is essential to the character of the College. I make these points, because not too many years ago, I was hearing both incoming and long-time faculty asking why we were spending our time doing certain "service" activities rather than having administrators do them. The sense was that we'd been hired to teach and do scholarship and that these committee activities were unnecessary. True, some of what faculty committees do—say, awarding grant money or awarding money for course development—could be done by administrative offices, but that would require the hiring of more administrators and, at least as serious, change an important part of what happens at Grinnell: the faculty role in making decisions about matters that closely touch us. I encourage you to be or stay involved. The College and the faculty especially need people who are willing to become involved and knowledgeable beyond the department level.

I had suggested last year that we might try something mentioned in our NCA evaluation: having at least some faculty meetings called by the Chair of the Faculty in order to increase faculty awareness that we are self-governed. As you know, I did chair a meeting in late September; I can't say it was a resounding success, because I only got a handful of responses from faculty—one a strong negative—to my request for reactions to the idea. I nonetheless think it worth another try. The Chairs of the Divisions and I also called two less formal meetings of the faculty in March for cross-divisional discussion of the capstone experiment, and we should continue to experiment with such forums.

### **Mentored Advanced Projects**

Those informal faculty discussions were part of what I think was the most important action by the faculty this year: taking control in April of the capstone experiment by voting for a proposal jointly developed in the Curriculum Committee and the Executive Council. Associate Dean Paula Smith was a great help in the development of this proposal. Both committees felt it urgent that the faculty either take charge of the capstone experiment by approving a working definition or decide that the experiment was sufficiently problematic to warrant discontinuing.

The administration had “jump-started” capstones last year for interested faculty, but, because the curriculum is the particular responsibility of the faculty, we needed to move control of the experiment to the faculty as a whole. The committees proposed a working definition for an experiment that would offer interested Grinnell College students the opportunity to undertake a culminating academic experience called a Mentored Advanced Project (MAP); the definition will be more fully developed as a result of our experiences over the next four years. I refer you to the document attached to the agenda for the April 17 faculty meeting for the complete description of what was proposed.

We hope that the definition will help solve two problems in our current arrangements for student independent work: that much of this work has been an “overload” for faculty and that such work has proliferated, with the various kinds not necessarily sharing many points of similarity. The definition of the MAP, we hope, will allow more focused independent work to gain visibility, so that individual faculty will shift their efforts away from a multiplicity of plus-2s, guided readings, independents, internship supervision, etc.; we also hope that a common definition will make it possible to give faculty members credit for their work.

The proposal in fact expanded the opportunities for advanced projects beyond what is currently done and thereby addressed another need expressed in discussions: the lack of opportunity to do interdisciplinary work at an advanced level. Expanding the opportunities for advanced interdisciplinary or interdepartmental seminar projects mirrors the direction in which the organization of knowledge in several disciplines has moved and might also play a part in attracting and retaining faculty, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences. We recognized that the advanced interdisciplinary seminars that would provide the context for these advanced academic projects present more difficulties in implementation than advanced research projects for individual students do, but we believed they should be actively promoted.

In the discussions of the culminating academic experience which led to the faculty vote in April, we also heard a concern that other valuable academic experiences might be overlooked, because they did not fit under the emerging definition, and you will remember that a second proposal was presented and approved. This proposal addressed concerns that new curricular efforts, such as advanced interdisciplinary seminars that did not include MAPs, a division-wide program of summer research with students who are less advanced, or the complete overhaul of a departmental curriculum, would be excluded from important funding. Council and the Curriculum Committee wanted to support a wider range of major curricular experiments than would come under the MAP definition and asked that the President set aside Fund for Excellence money to support a variety of major curricular experiments at all levels of the curriculum.

### **Faculty Allocation**

Council continued to ask that departments submit, for consideration in April, written statements to support requests for faculty positions; this practice allows departments to reflect on the current and future shapes of their departmental curricula, Council to consider requests for faculty positions equitably and in the largest context, and the faculty’s representatives on Council to advise the administration well. In September, however, recognizing that a department might be unable to meet the April deadline because of personnel considerations late in the year, we modified our practice and added a second period of consideration with a deadline of two weeks before the beginning of classes for fall semester.

As Council looked at proposals submitted this Spring, our operating principles were those we had published to the faculty in the minutes of our October 27, 1999 meeting. These principles, found in full in the May

10, 2000 excerpts of the Executive Council, include continuing our commitment to a liberal arts curriculum by maintaining a diversity of departments; conducting our deliberations in the context of current and future college-wide goals, including strengthening the diversity of the faculty; supporting a balance between departmental and more broadly defined staffing needs; supporting the quality of the academic program by ensuring a department is able to offer at least the minimal range of courses required for a major; supporting the quality of student education by avoiding reliance on temporary faculty for an extended period and by, where possible, considering leave-proofing a department; and supporting close faculty-student interactions by ensuring that classes are not so large as to interfere with student learning. As a result of our discussions this Spring, Council recommended seven replacement tenure track positions, one additional tenure track positions, one additional non-tenure track position, and the conversion of two positions in the Physical Education Department from Lecturer to non-tenure track Assistant Professor.

In other personnel actions, the Council worked in the Fall to clarify the information about the Consortium for a Stronger Minority Presence program, both for applicants and for departments on campus, and in the Spring recommended that two candidates, one in English and one in Political Science, be invited to spend 2000-2001 at the College as CSMP fellows. The clarification of the CSMP program was part of Council's discussions this year of ways to increase diversity among the faculty of the College. Council members also considered other ways in which applicant pools might become more diverse; a Diversity Officer and a faculty diversity hiring committee, as suggested by the President in his document "Diversity at Grinnell," could be major parts of such an effort. Clearly, diversity is a continuing topic for the College and for next year's Council.

Council also considered proposals from Humanities and Social Studies departments in the Fall for the first round of the two-year postdoctoral positions funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the College; candidates hired in these positions will allow released time for our faculty to mentor the fellows and to develop capstones and MAPs. Judging from our experience last year with postdocs in Science, Council anticipated that we might not have many applicants and recommended more proposals than there were positions. Therefore, when more strong candidates turned up than had been expected, we had to make choices among them and recommended candidates in English, Music, Political Science, and Sociology. In its next round of consideration of proposals from departments, Council will change its practice of this year and approve only as many as there are positions.

### **The Budget Committee**

In October, the 1999-2000 Faculty Budget Committee endorsed the recommendation of the 1998-99 Committee of a long-term salary policy for setting faculty salary increases. The Committee continued to think that such a policy would lessen some of the uncertainty surrounding its own work and would make possible a reduction in the department chairs' and the Budget Committee's burdens in annually reviewing all faculty for salary, because it could allow reviews on a multiple-year cycle. The policy recommended setting the salaries of Grinnell College faculty at 105% of the average salary at each rank of our comparison group of colleges.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, the Committee expressed its continued concern about the salaries at the Assistant Professor rank,<sup>2</sup> which continue to be low relative to our comparison group. Information from the March-April 1999

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<sup>1</sup>Amherst, Bowdoin, Colorado, Carleton, Davidson, Grinnell, Kenyon, Macalester, Oberlin, Swarthmore, Washington and Lee, and Williams.

<sup>2</sup>For purposes of our considerations, we put Assistant Professors and Instructors together.

issue of *Academe* showed that the Assistant Professors' percentage of the group average had been falling. The relevant figures (rounded up) are:

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Assistant	101%	99%	101%	98%
Associate	110%	109%	110%	107%
Professor	102%	102%	104%	103%.

The 1998-99 Budget Committee had attempted to improve the relative position of the Assistant Professors by taking money out of the 4.5% salary pool approved by the Trustees for 1999-2000, so that the pool was effectively reduced to 4% for the other ranks, and by using that money primarily for the benefit of untenured faculty in tenure track positions. The March-April 2000 issue of *Academe* shows that there was a small improvement (+.44%) in the relative position of the Assistant Professor rank as a result of those efforts. The position of the Professor rank also improved (+.49%); the Associate level declined (-1.95%), but still remained slightly above 105% of the average.<sup>3</sup> So that the 1999-2000 figures are

	1999
Assistant	99%
Associate	105%
Professor	104%

When members of the Budget Committee began meeting together in January 2000, we felt that efforts to improve the Assistant Professor rank were still needed; therefore, we were pleased when we learned that in addition to the general 4% salary pool for 2000-2001, the Trustees had set aside additional money to be used in improving salaries at that rank. We were concerned, however, about the general salary picture for Grinnell faculty, because the 4% general pool, combined with the 2.7% rate of inflation, translated to a 1.3% average real increase. In contrast, last year's pool of 4.5%, combined last year's 1.7% inflation, meant that the average increase would have been 2.8% above inflation.<sup>4</sup>

With the salary pool approved by the Trustees, the Committee decided it would recommend that all tenured faculty, regular faculty not on a tenure track, and untenured faculty on a tenure track, but past the first year, receive a merit raise calculated so that the average merit raise was 4%; that untenured faculty on a tenure track and in their first year receive a 3.5% raise as a market increase; that all untenured faculty on a tenure track receive an additional

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<sup>3</sup>Each category here includes those who are currently, whether continuing or not, in that category.

<sup>4</sup>On pages 9-10 of my report for 1998-99, you will find a chart tracing inflation and the real increases in Grinnell faculty salaries since 1991.

\$1,000; and that money remaining be used for equity adjustments.

The work of the members of the Budget Committee actually began in December, as we individually reviewed and evaluated faculty performance in teaching, scholarship, and service through the usual sources of information: the annual Faculty Activities Reports for 1998-99,<sup>5</sup> Vitae, and letters from department chairs, which filled in detail on activities reported in the FAR and evaluated each department colleague's performance. Last year's chairs did as thoughtful a job in their letters as the previous year's chairs did, and I would like to thank them again for their care. Chairs' letters are particularly helpful in the evaluation of teaching. I, for one, did not miss that end-of-course evaluation numbers found in past chairs' letters, since the variation in the meaning of the numbers was so great that they were incomparable across the faculty. I hope that the eoc instrument we're currently testing will prove more useful, but in the meantime, chairs based their comments on class visits, reviews, and conversations with colleagues.

The Committee met together through January to discuss and came to agreement on our evaluations for each faculty member in each of the categories. We then took those evaluations, which were numerical<sup>6</sup>, and normalized them by the average for the whole faculty, in order to even out the scales. I want to repeat, as I did last year, Jack Mutti's comment: all of these numbers may suggest a greater degree of precision than there is. They are primarily a way to keep things straight when looking at more than 130 different people and to see change over time. The final step of our evaluation was to weight merit in each category according to the percentages established by the 1997-98 Budget Committee (50% teaching, 33% scholarship, 17% service) and thereby to come up with an overall merit score.<sup>7</sup>

Using a formula, originally designed by 1994-95 Budget Committee, we translated the merit scores into percentage increases by creating a line that plotted merit scores against percentage raises. We created the two points sufficient to define a line by assigning the minimum merit score a raise of inflation (2.7%) plus .75%<sup>8</sup> and the average merit score a 4.0% raise. The line created traced the relationship between merit score and percentage raise and allowed us to calculate all other percentages. As noted above, we followed a different practice for first-year faculty, for whom we had no merit scores, and simply assigned them 3.5% salary increase, which we judged, based on the Dean's projected salary offers, was sufficient to keep them ahead of incoming faculty salaries. We then assigned tenure-track Assistant Professors, whether first-year or not, the additional \$1000, in order to improve the position of their average salary relative to our peers.

The Budget's Committee's recommended average percentage increase for tenure-track faculty<sup>9</sup> in each

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<sup>5</sup>The Committee supplemented the FAR information by asking the Registrar's Office for a list of numbers of advisees, so that we could note cases of unusually high numbers. We again decided that although we could modify the FAR form to include these numbers, we wouldn't, since this information is available elsewhere.

<sup>6</sup>For faculty on leave during 1998-99, the teaching rating that had been assigned for 1997-98 was, as has been customary, used. Scholarship and service for these faculty was treated in the same way as for other faculty.

<sup>7</sup>For Physical Education faculty, because their duties differ from those of other faculty, the Budget Committee assigned a single merit score to each person. The norm of these faculty was then set equal to the norm of all other faculty.

<sup>8</sup>We were following the precedent of last year's Budget Committee, which observed that .75% above inflation is now the standard SFS increase

<sup>9</sup>Thus, these percentages do not include Library faculty, for whom the Budget Committee does not make

rank for 2000-2001 (1999-2000) were:

Professor	4.00% (4.17%)
Associate Professor	4.03% (4.11%)
Assistant Professor	6.10% (5.56%)

After we had submitted our recommendations to the President and the Dean,<sup>10</sup> we sent department chairs a letter listing the recommended percentage increase for each member of the department. After the President and the Dean had considered our recommendations, they sent a salary letter to each faculty member.

Salary offers for 2000-2001 (1999-2000) full-time, continuing faculty by 1999-2000 rank were:<sup>11</sup>

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>
Professor	(44)	\$132,900	\$68,400	\$90,223	\$88,000
(44)					(\$127,800) (\$65,600) (\$86,616)
			(\$84,800)		
Associate	(46)	\$88,900	\$53,000	\$66,489	\$68,150
	(42)		(\$85,400)	(\$51,800)	(\$65,802) (\$66,400)
Assistant	(39)	\$70,200	\$42,000	\$49,797	\$47,950
	(43)		(\$67,600)	(\$40,300)	(\$48,242) (\$47,700)

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recommendations, or faculty not in tenure-track positions.

<sup>10</sup>The Budget Committee does not make salary recommendations for members of the Executive Council.

<sup>11</sup>These figures are supplied by the Dean's office and include full-time faculty in both tenure track and non-tenure track positions. They do not include Library faculty.

Average increases by rank for all full-time, continuing faculty were:<sup>1</sup>

Professor (rank as of 8/1/99)	4.27%	(4.22%)
Associate (rank as of 8/1/99)	4.17%	(4.22%)
Assistant (rank as of 8/1/99)	5.80%	(5.43%)

What the Budget Committee saw, as it went about its business of reviewing faculty activities in 1998-99 was extremely impressive. Forty-four tenure track faculty, or 40% of the total group of such faculty not on leaves both semester of 1998-99, reported they taught 75 new courses last year. Since the first-year faculty account for only .05% of the total group, the new courses they taught are a small part of this whole. In addition, 73 existing courses were substantially revised by 47 tenure track faculty, or 43% of the whole. Our faculty published 4 monographs, 10 edited books or special issues of journals, 54 major articles or book chapters, and 51 shorter pieces such as book reviews. There were 22 major, regional or national, off-campus exhibitions or performances; 88 presentations at national or international professional meetings; 19 presentations at regional meetings; and 79 invited seminars, exhibits, or performances by Grinnell faculty. When I calculated the percentage of faculty who produced externally recognized scholarship, I included tenure track faculty on leave and found that 83 people, or 65% of the whole, were involved. Not a few “stars,” as I said both to the Trustees and to you, but a lot of very active faculty. Although the percentages of those engaged in either these teaching or scholarly activities of course change from year to year, I think this year is probably not atypical. In service to the College and to the academic profession--and setting aside the substantial amount of “ordinary” service on committees, in departments, divisions, or concentrations, and for the College as a whole--30 faculty carried out major responsibilities on a campus committee or chaired a campus committee. That 30 doesn't necessarily include chairs of the 20+ academic departments or 10 concentrations, although there is some overlap. Off-campus, 16 Grinnell College faculty chaired or carried out major responsibilities on committees and boards, and 5 Grinnell faculty served as invited consultants or evaluators at other institutions, while 33 served as reviewers or editors for journals or grant agencies. In sum, as I pointed out to the Trustees, the figures indicate a hard working faculty which is dedicated to invention and development in teaching, whose contributions to the advancing of knowledge in a wide variety of fields are publically recognized in those fields, and whose leadership and service move internal and external organizations forward.

### **Assorted Other Faculty Actions**

The faculty returned to the question of end-of-course evaluations in the Fall and, at the recommendation of the Council, voted on November 1<sup>st</sup> to continue the experiment begun Spring 1999 of using a new, common, form that would be likely to produce more valid and reliable information than our previous multiple eoc forms. You'll remember Council argued that successive Personnel and Budget Committees had not found reports relying on different forms and scales helpful in carrying out their duties. The vote at the November 1<sup>st</sup> faculty meeting was, specifically, to extend the eoc experiment two additional semesters with a revised set of questions.

At its February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the faculty approved, as recommended by Council, revised wording in the *Faculty Handbook* which shortened the length of time, from February 1<sup>st</sup> of the fourth year to November 1<sup>st</sup> of the

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<sup>1</sup>Again, these percentages include full-time faculty in both tenure track and non-tenure track positions, but do not include Library faculty.

third, that is allowed new faculty for completion of the terminal degree. Council recommended this action, because it was in line with common practice at other colleges and, more important, because it allowed a department enough time to initiate a search, if necessary, and it reduced the number of reviews conducted.

During the February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, and on the recommendation of the Executive Council, the faculty approved a "Faculty Grievance Procedure," which will be included in the *Faculty Handbook* as an appendix. This is a general grievance procedure for matters not covered by our existing procedures; the lack of such a procedure had been a concern to Councils since 1997-98. Jonathan Brand was a great help in the development of the document, which took elements from the AAUP provisions and from procedures at some of the colleges in our peer group and modified them to fit Grinnell College.

At its first meeting in March, the faculty voted to revise the procedure, approved in February 1999, for amending the *Handbook*, and, at the final meeting of the faculty in May, Sig Barber, for the Faculty Organization Committee, brought to the floor the revised version of the *Faculty Handbook*, which resulted from FOC's complete review of the language of the *Handbook*. This review followed, you will remember, from the work done by Don Smith, Paula Smith, and Jonathan Brand during 1998-99 that added material deleted from the Board of Trustee By-Laws, but needed for the faculty. The revision thoroughly looked at the language, but avoided any substantial changes in current policies. The faculty adopted the *Handbook* as presented by the FOC.

In May, Council sent a memo to the faculty endorsing our current policy of one course release every two years for department chairs. This recommendation was based on a consideration both of searches, reviews, other business conducted by departments during the 1996-99 period and of the practices at our peer schools. Both our experiences and those practices showed considerable variation; because Council did not want to recommend an action that would lead to a reduction in course offerings, it chose instead to recommend the continuation of our policy, but also to call attention to the possibility of an extra course reduction in the event of a particularly busy year and to advise the Dean's Office to work with departments in finding ways to shift what can be shifted from the department chairs to the faculty secretaries.

## **Conclusion**

Instead of the charts and graphs of last year, I include this year copies of the reports I presented to the Trustees at their meetings during 1998-2000. I hope I have represented you well; I call your attention particularly to the April 1999 report in which I discuss the process of hiring new faculty. You will see that the motif in all my reports is the continuous change that defines our lives. And change, of course, reminds me of the advice for dealing with change found in Marge Piercy's "September Afternoon at Four O'Clock," which I read at the first faculty meeting of this year: "hold hard and let / go and go on."

One of this year's changes was the election of a new Chair of the Faculty; as Bob Grey takes his seat, I wish him much good luck and satisfaction in a very interesting position. Shortly before I started two years ago, my horoscope declared that "If you feel your talents are under-used, you should do something about it. With the right amount of time, money, and application you could develop a specialist skill and perhaps discover a different way of life."

I close, as we approach Midsummer's Night. I shall end, therefore, not as I did last year with a passage from Chaucer urging us to think of the common good, but with the words of Shakespeare's amateur actor, Bottom the weaver:

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass, if he go about t'expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had—but man is but a patch'd fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was.

*(A Midsummer Night's Dream, IV, i, 205-214)*

Elizabeth A. Dobbs  
June 20, 2000

September 29, 1998

To: The Grinnell College Board of Trustees  
From: Elizabeth Dobbs, Chair of the Faculty

The Faculty Handbook lists representing faculty opinion to the Board of Trustees as one of the duties of the Chair of the Faculty. I'll do my best to carry out this duty, but in matters of opinion among a group of people, I find that, as Chaucer says of the Canterbury pilgrims, "diverse folk diversely . . . seyde." For the most part, I would like to use my reports to set out some areas of faculty activity or concern. Because I'm new to the job, what I say will be brief.

At an early faculty meeting this year, Vince Cuseo, Director of Admission, made a short presentation on the admission rating system, approved by the faculty twelve years ago, and on the improvement over the last two years in admission rating scores. This presentation was part of an effort to enhance communications between the Admission and Financial Aid Offices and the faculty. In another part of that effort, the Admission and Financial Aid Committee, chaired by the Dean of the College, will be meeting biweekly, far more frequently than in past years, to look at a range of issues. In particular, we will discuss ways we measure student success in order to test our rating system. Some faculty on the Committee, along with other faculty, also met in late summer with representatives of firms which could help us redesign our admission materials. The Committee will be meeting with the firm selected. Past faculty members of Admission and Financial Aid Committee regard this increased activity as desirable. The qualities and gifts of admitted students are crucial to the work we as faculty do in the classroom and across the curriculum.

Concern for what our admitted students do also showed up in the Transcript Analysis Workshop in which a group of faculty participated last summer. The Workshop was convened by the Dean of the College as part of our self-study. Participants individually developed definitions of liberal arts education and then rated transcripts of fifty-two 1997 graduates. After very lively and useful discussion of our ratings and definitions, the group came to agreement on several models of liberal arts curricula. Among the virtues of this Workshop was the fact that by looking at individual programs of study, rather than at percentages of students taking one or another kind of course, we had a livelier sense of what our students actually do. The Dean will bring this exercise to the larger group of faculty by devoting several faculty meetings to transcript analysis.

This broadening of transcript analysis is a good way both to look at what our students do during their four years at Grinnell College and, at least as important, to open up a cross-College discussion of liberal arts curricula among faculty. We have all been engaged in productive discussions of our curricula within our departments and concentrations as we've gone through reviews and as we've developed plans for the assessment of student learning; we can now enlarge that discussion to more broadly conceived student curricula.

An "open curriculum" especially calls for careful planning by student and faculty adviser, both semester by semester and over larger units of time. Student members of last year's Curriculum Committee raised the possibility of asking all students to do a long term plan of the sort currently required, for instance, by off-campus study; consideration of that idea is on this year's Curriculum Committee agenda. On the faculty side, discussion of the liberal arts is essential for our education as advisers. I am hopeful that the wider analysis of transcripts, and the discussions accompanying that analysis, will highlight the time, patience, and skill required in good advising.

The Transcript Analysis Workshop, of course, was not the only workshop in which faculty took part this summer. Last summer could in fact be called the "summer of workshops." In addition to the annual faculty workshops on teaching writing and oral skills, workshops were held on interdisciplinary curricular development--both across and within departments--and on technology and curricular development. Faculty were also involved in developing concrete proposals for the Fund for Excellence. Those having

directly to do with the academic program range from ideas that touch on a part of the program to others that reach more widely across the curriculum, particularly in the area of enriching the curriculum at the advanced level, both inside and outside the major. President Osgood has set up a process that calls for submission of proposals by a deadline of October 1<sup>st</sup>; discussions involving students, staff, faculty, trustees, and others from the second half of October through November; a tentative set of commitments coming from these discussions and circulated for further discussion during the first week of December; and possible decision(s) by the President by the end of this semester. In addition to stimulating the generation of creative ideas, the Fund for Excellence has also served a very positive purpose of being a catalyst for intense discussions about our academic program among faculty from different disciplines. George Drake and I shared the leadership in a workshop looking at a number of proposals having to do with interdisciplinary study, and many faculty who participated, especially ones who have come to Grinnell in recent years, commented on the value of hearing in depth from fellow faculty in other disciplines. We all look forward to the proposals that will be submitted; I hope at least one among whichever proposals go forward will address the academic program.

In the meantime, quite independent of the Fund for Excellence, the faculty continue to develop the academic program in interesting new ways and to receive substantial outside funding for that development. The National Science Foundation has awarded the College a three-year grant of \$500,000 to support the integration of research and education in the sciences. Grinnell will use the grant for two projects: 1) designing a longitudinal study to test our assertion that early integration of research into science education is beneficial, and 2) supporting four post-doctoral teacher/scholars in work with Grinnell faculty on curricula and on student research in such interdisciplinary areas as biological chemistry, neuroscience, materials science, and computational biology. The History Department has also received an external grant, \$25,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and is in the process of developing a cross-cultural introductory history course, which they've tentatively titled "Cultural Encounters" and which will lead into other history courses.

Last, but hardly least, the faculty welcomed Russell Osgood as our twelfth president and will do so more formally on October 10<sup>th</sup>. As President Osgood moves about our community getting to know all of us and what we're trying to accomplish, we have in turn had the chance to begin to get to know him. My sense is that an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation is developing between the President and the faculty. Such an atmosphere can only support and continue our movement toward realizing the full potential of Grinnell College.

I welcome questions.

February 1, 1999

To: The Grinnell College Board of Trustees  
From: Elizabeth A. Dobbs, Chair of the Faculty

As in my report at your last meeting, I offer here my reading of various matters that touch on the lives of the faculty. I will look once again at two topics of my October report, transcript analysis and Fund for Excellence projects, and then will dwell, at somewhat greater length, on the subject of faculty accomplishment.

In mid semester and as planned, Dean Swartz expanded the transcript analysis project beyond the summer group of faculty who had read and discussed transcripts of recent Grinnell graduates in relation to models of liberal arts curricula. Carol Trosset of the Office of Institutional Research, who has been essential to this project, used the responses of those faculty to select a subset of transcripts which she asked all faculty individually to rate. Having analyzed the eighty-three returns, she assigned us to small discussion groups during a faculty meeting in early November. She then did an analysis of notes kept by recorders in each group and reported results at our last faculty meeting in December. Some faculty expressed concern that the transcripts offered inaccurate records of student curricula, because they did not record AP and transfer credit, but if the exercise is seen primarily as a stimulus to curricular discussion, I think it remains valuable. Ms. Trosset found, in brief, that breadth in curricular choices is strongly valued, but defined in somewhat different ways as topics or modes of thought or skills. I don't think these different kinds of breadth are mutually exclusive. Faculty across divisions also value the study of science, math, and foreign language, and many agree students should have depth beyond the major.

I suggested last time that I regard the transcript analysis project as valuable in itself, because it engages faculty in discussion about the curriculum both in its potential form, to borrow a term from physics, as a complete set of offerings, and in its actual or enacted form, when the potential is realized in curricular choices made by individual students. Beyond this inherent value of the transcript exercise is the possibility of improving the educational experiences of our students. As a result of our work last semester, the Dean and the Curriculum Committee will be drafting text for inclusion in the catalog and other advising material, which may well set out curricular models to be used by students and advisers.

The Fund for Excellence process has moved forward steadily. I think the faculty appreciated President Osgood's offers to discuss with him not only his reactions to proposals submitted in October and the principles he saw underlying them, but also the draft of his memorandum about these proposals. He sent out the final version of the memorandum, "Grinnell College and the Future," on December 17<sup>th</sup> and on the 21<sup>st</sup> a summary of specific actions on proposals. I'd like to comment on two areas that have been funded and that I think are of special interest to the quality of the education of our students.

The first is a grouping of several proposals that shared the goal of enhancing students' real and perceived achievements by means of "capstone" experiences during their last semesters. The Dean's office has just given us a structure for planning these capstone opportunities and has invited interested faculty to submit descriptions, which can take the form of disciplinary or interdisciplinary seminars, projects in the arts, international work or study tours, student-faculty research, senior theses, or service learning. We hope to see projects, in many of these forms, in the planning stages this summer and in trial runs during the next academic year. With a short deadline of February 10, set by the need to make arrangements for next year's class schedule, we've gone into high gear, but I'm hopeful that faculty will build on their work of last summer and that there will be a representative group of applications. The hoped-for result of these experiments, greater student achievement, will be worth the effort.

The other Fund for Excellence project I want to mention, and one which is already underway, is the Alumni Scholars program. This relatively modest project will bring up to ten alumni/ae to the College for

visits of three to four days, during which they will speak to the campus about their current work and their accomplishments since graduating. Don Smith in the History Department, who together with Chuck Sullivan in Biology is in charge of this program, reports that in the ten days since the program was announced, five such visits, in Art, Classics/Linguistics, Economics, History, and Physics—clearly well-distributed over the divisions—are already being planned. The good that will result from this program is various: alumni/ae will be more closely connected or reconnected to the College; faculty will be able to renew acquaintance with former students and take pleasure in their accomplishments; and, most important, our current students will have before them models of what Grinnell College graduates can do with their lives. Like the capstone experiences, I hope that the Alumni Scholars program will encourage achievement among our students.

To turn now to faculty achievements, let me speak of what I have seen in the annual Faculty Activity Reports. The Faculty Budget Committee, made up of myself and the Chairs of the three academic divisions, reads these reports as part of our work in recommending faculty salaries. As we did so last month, I was struck by the fact that we are perhaps the only group on campus to hear, at one time and as a whole, the collection of individual faculty voices and to have before us the entire range of faculty accomplishments. We all came away from that reading with the same, clear impression of a very active and very accomplished faculty.

In teaching, we read of fifty-five courses taught for the first time and of sixty-three major revisions in courses. We saw participation among all ranks of the faculty in activities related to teaching development, such as faculty-faculty tutorials, teaching discussion groups, weekly or biennial reading groups, departmental working groups, and summer workshops. And we saw a great deal of independent, often individual, work with students in summer research, guided reading, independent projects, and senior theses.

The area we call “Service” on the FAR takes in both external and internal work. To focus on the latter, we saw service on, for instance, standing committees of the faculty, committees for internal or external awards, committees to administer grants, and committees connected to interdisciplinary concentrations. Our clear impression is that service on these and other committees finally all relates to the College’s defining activity of educating students. Here, too, the Budget Committee has been impressed by the degree to which individual faculty involve themselves in these activities so necessary to the life of this educational community. Further, in external service, Grinnell faculty serve on forty-two national and ten regional committees.

Accomplishments in scholarship, the Budget Committee’s third area of concern, not only affect our teaching, in a variety of direct and indirect ways, but also provide evidence of the external recognition achieved by Grinnell College faculty. To offer a selection of the record of scholarship we saw, we noted that in the period between June 1, 1997 and May 31, 1998, Grinnell faculty published eight books, seventeen chapters in books, forty-three peer-reviewed articles, twenty-three invited book reviews, and eighteen invited encyclopedia or dictionary entries. Faculty members made sixteen presentations, primarily papers, at international meetings, and eighty-nine at national meetings. Grinnell faculty also presented sixteen exhibits and performances in national and international venues.

What the Faculty Budget Committee saw, in short, was a faculty engaged not only in looking for ways to enhance the opportunities for achievement among Grinnell College students, but also in modeling achievement in teaching, service to the educational community, and scholarship. We hope the Board of Trustees will decide on an increase in the faculty salary pool that will allow us to make merit recommendations appropriate to these accomplishments.

Aside from considerations related to salaries of continuing faculty, faculty salaries also come to the fore in the second semester as many departments have on-campus interviews for hiring new faculty. Although the job market is tight in almost all areas, and would therefore appear to be very favorable to employers, we often find that the number of highly qualified candidates interested in teaching at an excellent liberal arts college is considerably less than the total number of applicants and that we are also likely to be in competition for these candidates with other excellent liberal arts colleges. What we offer as starting

salaries and what candidates can see in the way of our salary-range at different ranks are parts of successful hiring efforts.

In our lives as faculty, we are constantly involved in or witness to change. These decisions about hiring, for example, will result in new faculty joining the Grinnell College community and bringing with them ideas that will contribute to what we do and the way we think about what we do, perhaps for years to come. Our senior students, most of whom we have watched and encouraged through four years of development, are looking toward the next stages of their lives, in some cases just now finding out which graduate programs have accepted them. Although our graduates leave us, many remain connected to the College and to us, as some of you have, for years afterwards. A more final way we experience change, however, is when a fellow faculty member dies. In a small community such as Grinnell College, in which we are intensely involved in our shared activity of teaching and intensely involved in each others' lives, we feel this change most deeply. We feel it especially with faculty who have lived among us for many years, sometimes indeed the majority of their lives, and who have themselves shaped the life we lead. This is a somber note on which to end my report, but it is on my mind with the recent deaths of two long-time colleagues and the serious illness of another. In a very real way, many Grinnell faculty do in fact give their lives to their students and to this College.

April 28, 1999

To: The Grinnell College Board of Trustees  
 From: Elizabeth A. Dobbs, Chair of the Faculty

The faculty we hire and promote are critical to the College. Bluntly put, without the faculty, the College wouldn't exist. This fact is so obvious one doesn't usually bother to point it out.

I think, however, a less general statement makes the importance of the faculty even more clear: without a faculty made up of individuals with *particular* characteristics, Grinnell College would not be Grinnell College. Each individual faculty member must, of course, be intelligent and well-trained in a discipline, but these are characteristics shared with university faculty. Grinnell College faculty must also care passionately about teaching, believe deeply in liberal arts education, find real pleasure in working closely with students, and be committed enough to the life of the academic community to become involved in its governance. Moreover, at this moment of change stimulated by the Fund for Excellence, Grinnell College needs a group of faculty willing to stretch themselves beyond the many demands already engaging their energies in order to take part in the exploration of new ideas.

Where do we find the faculty we need? The question is easily answered, one might think, since the press is full of stories about un- and under-employed academics. But does this situation in fact solve our problem? Not necessarily. We know, for instance, that the number of people looking for faculty positions can vary according to discipline or subdiscipline or even year, a variation which may or may not match our specific disciplinary needs. Indeed, this year the beleaguered humanities market is much improved for applicants, and a colleague in the Economics Department tells me it's a seller's market in his discipline. Regardless of the fluctuation in numbers, we also know that only *some* fraction of any total number of available people is likely to combine all, or most, of the characteristics important to Grinnell College.

I thought it worth opening my final report of the year with this general sketch of the interplay between our need for a *certain kind* of faculty and the available pool of faculty in order to emphasize my initial points: the faculty is essential to an academic institution, but the faculty needed by a particular institution is a *subset*—and perhaps a fairly small one—of all available faculty. I'm picking up here an idea on which I touched very lightly in my report in February, when I connected the problem of hiring faculty with a plea for a good salary pool.

With these thoughts as a context, I decided I would focus this report on two aspects of the process of hiring new faculty. The first, which can be seen in current discussions on the Executive Council about faculty allocations, is undergoing a change this year; the second, actually conducting a search for a new faculty member, has remained substantially the same for some years. In the course of these comments, I set out in rough outline a pattern I think characteristic of our current curriculum and add detail to the definition of Grinnell's "real" pool of potential faculty.

In its long-range planning function, the Executive Council gives advice on faculty positions. This advice has most often been given when a faculty position long part of a department falls vacant. A few weeks ago in the English Department, for instance, our long-time American Literature position—actually a position and a half—became vacant because of two resignations. Briefly, the College practice has been that in such a case, a department, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty, begins a discussion of needs related both to the department's curriculum and to the department's obligation to the College curriculum as a whole. There's not always a clear distinction here, but you could think of it as the difference between what a department offers particularly, although not exclusively, for majors and what it offers for all students. The department thinks of ways both these needs can be met through a new hire and then writes a position description. I'll come back to this description, when I turn to the process of conducting a search. The description goes to the Executive Council for discussion and approval; if approved, the department chair meets with the Dean and the Affirmative Action Officer to discuss its placement. I'll continue shortly with what next happens. Less frequently, the Executive Council considers requests from departments for additions of new positions.

Until this year, requests for replacing long-time positions and requests for new positions have come to the Executive Council throughout the year. The timing of a national convention at which candidates could be interviewed, for instance, might determine when a department sent forward a replacement request; on the other hand, learning of the possibility of new funding might encourage a department to request a new position. This pattern of requests, however, has not allowed the Executive Council to look widely and simultaneously at *all* the curricular needs of the College. The Council has always tried to look as broadly as possible, of course, but there's been something of a fragmentary quality to its dealings with position requests. I think this situation has troubled Councils; when I was on the Council in the early 90s, we fretted over what we might miss in the way of needs, even as we tried to consider each position request in the broadest terms.

Last November, the Executive Council established a new procedure for beginning this process. We now ask each department to use the occasion of a request for a position as a significant opportunity to reflect on the departmental curriculum and on contributions outside the department. We also ask that those reflections be incorporated in a written argument, even in the case of a replacement, that is more developed than in the past, so we have a fuller sense of the rationale behind a request. And we have asked departments to submit these requests by April 1<sup>st</sup>. By considering them together, we can better see ways in which they interact with one another and meet College needs. We realize, of course, that all requests will not necessarily meet this deadline; unexpected and sudden changes in departmental staffing, such as just occurred in the English Department, may mean the deadline is missed and the Council needs to adjust.

The Executive Council made this change, I think, because of several fortuitous factors: we have recently completed our ten-year re-accreditation and the self-study that accompanied it; departments are working through their own cycles of departmental reviews; and the Fund for Excellence has encouraged curricular initiatives. These factors would have had considerably less effect had the faculty not created in 1995 a separate Personnel Committee and thus freed the Executive Council to address long-range planning more fully.

We are just now in the midst of our considerations, and the dimensions of what we're about are gradually becoming clear to us. We've had wide-ranging discussions in several meetings as we try to develop guidelines for these considerations and as we attempt to sort out how we got into our current state of pressures strongly felt one way or another depending on where one is in the college. On this last question, the open curriculum has doubtless played its part in creating pressures, but we think they also result from the way we are, appropriately and to good effect, all mixed up with one another. My description of a department's courses for majors, on the one hand, and courses for all students, on the other, is not quite true. The English and Anthropology Departments, for instance, have a language requirement for majors and depend on the foreign language departments to offer courses which support that requirement. The statistics course, required by, among others, the Economics, Psychology, and Sociology Departments, is taught in different departments each semester. On a more complicated scale, the interdisciplinary concentrations, which can represent some of the most innovative and exciting curricular work at the College, call for complex interactions and agreements among multiple departments. All these instances of interaction have been positive developments in the curriculum, but they have developed, I think, without a full appreciation of interconnectedness and of consequences. Therefore, if a department with multiple involvement not only in its own curriculum, whether for its majors or for all students, but also in curricula on any number of other fronts, should decide it can't staff a course on one of these fronts, perhaps a concentration, the consequences for the concentration can be significant.

This complex interaction among courses is, as I see it, a pattern characteristic of our current curriculum. It is a positive and admirable characteristic, because it helps make us part of a whole academic community, rather than of separate, isolated departments, and because it mirrors the breaking down of boundaries going on throughout the disciplines. It does, however, make the Executive Council consideration of requests for faculty positions a three-, if not four-, dimensional task, and a task, as I suggested earlier, whose measure we are just taking.

Let me set aside my description of this part of the process of hiring new faculty and turn back to the department, but I want you to keep in mind these complex interactions I've just mentioned. What I describe now will be the general shape of a relatively simple search, although the particulars of searches vary somewhat from discipline to discipline. You'll see again that the pool of potential faculty is in fact much smaller than it appears to be.

So we pick up the story at the point of a department's writing its position description. What would the setting out of courses associated with the position look like? Let's take my position as an example. When it becomes vacant, and assuming the College decides to continue to have a person trained in and teaching medieval literature, the English Department's description will not include a large number of courses *in* medieval literature. If we were to replicate my current arrangement of courses—and I have no idea if ten or so years from now, we would—the two-year, ten-course cycle of the position would have only three courses related to medieval language and literature: Chaucer, Medieval Literature, and English Historical Linguistics. The other courses would be first-year Tutorials, Humanities courses, introductory courses, survey courses, and, undoubtedly, capstone seminars. Again, using simply what I now offer and assuming the continued existence of concentrations, some of those courses would be part of the Western European Studies, the Linguistics, the Gender and Women's Studies Concentrations. I've even, several times, taught a module for a course that's in the Technology Concentration. And I don't think I'm at all unusual for a Grinnell College faculty member.

Suppose that only people committed to what's implicit in the description were to apply—instead of all those trying to find *any* medieval job—we'd still be seeking a somewhat rare bird. I think, however, this is the bird all our departments seek: someone immersed in a particular area of study, as evidenced by the years spent becoming a specialist in that area, but willing to have this specialization called upon in very few courses, and interested in and capable of branching out, to mix my metaphors, in other directions. Such a person would, so to speak, continually reinvent him- or herself as a teacher-scholar. In a word, we're looking for someone who loves teaching and the broad education of the liberal arts as much as he or she loves a particular specialization.

Let me move rather more rapidly through the next steps by skipping some and focusing on a department's actions. The description is placed in various venues, usually for a period of some months; applications, which can number upwards of 300 depending on the search, are received, and dossiers requested and read, usually by all members of a department. A group of perhaps ten people to be interviewed is agreed upon. Bearing in mind the particular characteristics Grinnell College is looking for, you can see that choosing ten may not necessarily be terribly difficult. Although preliminary interviews might be conducted over the telephone, the in-depth interviews usually take place at a national convention between an interview team from the department and prospective candidates. Surprising things can be learned about the differences in each applicant's ability to present a self on paper and in person: bright lights can disappear, and dark horses can pull ahead. At the end of the day, the department is down to three people it thinks should be invited for an on-campus interview. Judging by what I've heard from candidates, Grinnell's interviews at the convention are models of civility and consideration, while the on-campus interviews are exhilarating endurance tests, because faculty inside and outside the department, members of the Executive Council and of the Administration, students, a candidate lecture, and assorted tours are all included. We're trying, of course, to give a candidate a preview of what life will be like here: strenuous, but involving interesting interaction with lots of different groups. Needless to say, we always put considerable effort into making the College as attractive as possible to our candidates.

And now we come down to the choices of the first, second, and third person to whom an offer will be made. You can see that the very large pool of available faculty has become significantly smaller, and I think even were we allowed to interview or bring to campus twice as many people, we'd still come down to a very small group who look, in our best judgment, like good bets. But will we be able to hire any of these top candidates? Here we have a further narrowing of the pool of potential faculty. First, other colleges and universities are probably in competition with us for these same people, and a job offer is sometimes the moment when a candidate realizes he or she would rather be teaching in a university, where a greater degree of specialization can be continued, than in a small college. If a person is committed to small colleges and liberal arts teaching, what may now make the difference is which other

such colleges are interested in this candidate. Further, two sometimes interrelated factors can play a crucial part in the success of our hiring a person who fits our needs well: partner employment and location.

The College can and does make efforts to assist in finding employment for partners. But what's needed is something more specialized than just a "job," because partners of academics are themselves often highly trained and have perhaps already established careers of their own. What is available is limited by where Grinnell College is located. I think we should continue and improve our efforts of assistance, but I suspect that our best efforts might fail and that repeated success could be as problematic as failure. I know of two cases this year—one of hiring, another of retention—in which we lost faculty precisely because of partner employment. Some faculty have worked out their own solutions, but these often involve maintaining two households. And the answer is not to hire people without partners or without partners who want jobs! I can think of two people who fit those categories—again, one retention and the other a hire—for whom location presented personal rather than professional problems. Finally, for some of us, with or without partners who do or don't want jobs, our location limits possibilities for research while classes are in session.

A successful hire always feels a bit like a coup. Indeed, Grinnell College's past success in finding the particular faculty it needs is a tribute both to the time and effort spent in the process and to sheer good fortune. Our retention of faculty we want to promote is similarly dependent on time, effort, and fortune. The strength of our faculty is, in fact, a minor miracle. I wish us continued luck.

September 13, 1999

To: The Grinnell College Board of Trustees  
 From: Elizabeth A. Dobbs, Chair of the Faculty

In my first report last year, I spoke to you about recent activities of the faculty, especially as they related to our thinking about the curricula that Grinnell College students follow. In this report, I look at the other side of the coin: what's on offer to the student. The tack I take is through "faculty development," and I selected a small number, out of the large current group, of faculty projects in order to give substance to that term. These are projects about which you've already heard, so they'll be familiar; what I want to focus on is the concrete forms these projects have been taking, what they mean for the faculty, and where they're going. The first two projects have especially benefitted from the Fund for Excellence.

In the last year, as part of our effort to challenge to students in their last semesters and to encourage them to bring together what they've learned, faculty have been working on the development of a capstone interdisciplinary seminar, "Freedom and Authority," under the direction of Dan Kaiser of the History Department. The group intends to offer an exploration of the claims and relations of the two topics. They held a workshop over the summer, which will continue this year as a reading and discussion group, in which they explored texts that, as Dan Kaiser explained it, "ranged widely across the fields of learning in an effort to see how the different disciplinary traditions and epistemologies conceive of freedom, how recent findings in these branches of knowledge may affect human freedom, and what role 'authority'—variously conceived—plays in limiting or enabling human freedom." Topics explored included "God and Culture," "Genes, the Brain, and Technology," and "Science, Law, Politics, and History." Ten faculty took part in the summer workshop, and four faculty have already made plans to teach in this seminar; the group is hopeful that they will offer two team-taught courses in 2000-2001. As a practical matter, the participants agreed that "freedom and authority" will be a general rubric under which there could be divergent seminars with quite different content depending on the interests of the faculty offering them.

The Center for Prairie Studies continues to develop its program. You heard Jon Andelson of the Anthropology Department speak about the Prairie Studies initiative at the Perry meeting in June, particularly about the ways the topic is engaging in itself, pertinent to our location, and timely. Some of the Prairie Studies group's activities have already led to curricular change in Jon Andelson's "Prairie Encounters" tutorial and Jon Chenette of the Music Department's "The Prairie in the Arts" tutorial; Jackie Brown in Biology is offering an introductory course on prairie restoration, and Sandy Moffett has included a segment on the prairies in one of his Theatre courses. For the future, Tony Crowley of the Art Department is developing several of his courses so that they feature the prairie, and Victoria Brown in History is submitting a proposal to the NEH for development of a course on "Women on the Prairie, 1850-1930." Faculty interested in Prairie Studies came together for three, short workshops last summer in order to make each of them, and the group as a whole, interdisciplinary. The workshops were for planning, but also for learning about each other's discipline through lectures offered by different member faculty. Wayne Moyer of the Political Science Department, for instance, lectured on the freedom to farm, Jon Chenette on representing place in music, and Tony Crowley on the prairie and visual art. In a word, the group is in the process of individual faculty development and development of the whole group. Their thinking is still evolving on where they might end up. They might turn into a concentration, but, as Jon Andelson told me, at the moment they're not interested in becoming simply another concentration; they may be more interested in fact in developing components of courses, rather than full courses. He also pointed out that the group needs to measure the success of and demand for courses offered this year and next, before they go forward. But the clear aim of Prairie Studies now and in the future is "to draw students' attention to the resources and story of this region and have them then use these resources for active learning."

The third faculty project that I'll talk about is the new Biological Chemistry major and the impact that it's already having. Bruce Voyles, Chair of the Science Division, who has been my chief informant here,

made a nice comparison; he said that the new major is “like Prairie Studies: if you take in a bigger picture, you can do something wonderful,” but he warns that “you have to be willing to give up your parochialism.” The Biological Chemistry major is the result of four years of discussion and of figuring out how to bring this new and developing discipline to Grinnell College. One reason for creating the new major is to be competitive with our peer schools; another, at least as strong, reason is that the disciplines of biology and chemistry have been developing so they now both meet at the molecular level. As Bruce says, “chemists see that many of the questions that are interesting to them have a biological context, and biologists see that some of the most interesting things are happening at the molecular level.” He points out that both departments were leaving students to make the connections between the two areas of science themselves and that each department was having to reinvent the wheel, because they couldn’t count on the students in their courses having sufficient background in the other science. The new major will come into existence next year, but already Biology is developing a new one-semester introductory course in which students will acquire background in both biology and chemistry. A new faculty member, a young biochemist, is on board to help with the new major, and Bruce reports that given the number of students who have spoken to him about wanting to start this new major this year, the demand will already be in place, when it’s actually offered next year. As a result in part of the thinking that’s been going on, the Biology curriculum is being completely redone, and Bruce anticipates that the curriculum in Chemistry will also change. In order to find further financial support, Bruce is currently writing a grant which Grinnell College has been invited to submit to the Howard Hughes Foundation for \$1.7 million to support the new Biological Chemistry major, the changes in biology, and work in neurosciences. Judging from what he saw at a recent conference, Bruce says that many schools are addressing biological chemistry by leaving a chemistry major pretty much as is and adding the requirement of a biology course; at Grinnell, he says, “we did it right, because people were willing to give up territory.”

Meanwhile, reading groups such as those on “Race and Ethnic Studies,” “Political Economy,” and the “Feminist Theory” continue to provide opportunities for faculty development. Faculty across the college continue to rethink courses; we can track some of that rethinking by looking at funding. To mention just two examples, ten individual faculty used funds from the Multi/Intercultural Curricular Development Committee to increase the coverage of diversity by creating new courses, or revising or adding components to existing courses; and twelve faculty each used funds from the Gender and Women’s Studies Committee to revise or develop courses incorporating gender issues. Departments and Concentrations held summer workshops. Political Science, for example, prepared for its outside review and the Global Development Studies Concentration held its first workshop, with the participants discussing a group of common readings in order to make faculty outside the concentration aware of development study issues and to examine definitions and evaluate the concentration. The Japanese/East Asian Studies Workshop explored a new area, while the workshops that relate to developing particular teaching skills—oral communications and writing—continued, and the Mellon Technology Workshops were again offered.

As I understand one of Plato’s ideas, things can be said to be either in a state of being or a state of becoming; that is, you are either fully something or in the process of becoming something. In those terms, I think that a professor is a curious creature, because to be a professor is to be always in a state of becoming, to be always undergoing “faculty development.” When we hire someone to be a Grinnell college professor, we ask that that person already have achieved a level of knowledge in a discipline and a competency in teaching. But we also recognize that each person’s career as this thing called a “professor” will be one of continuous change and growth, because new knowledge or new ways of looking at or combining things already known will develop, and new idea about teaching will present themselves for experiment. In the three projects I’ve described, we’ve seen evidence of all of these kinds of development: new knowledge incorporated into the curriculum, a new look at our physical surroundings, the breaking down of boundaries between disciplines, and a new emphasis on teaching students to be independent learners. To be a professor, you need to keep your knees bent.

May 17, 2000

To: The Grinnell College Board of Trustees  
From: Elizabeth A. Dobbs, Chair of the Faculty

For my final report to you, I thought I'd continue with the topic that I've explored in my earlier reports: change in the College as it relates to the life of the faculty. I'll end with a personal change by introducing my successor as Chair of the Faculty.

The actual collection of individuals who constitute what is called the "faculty" changes, of course, every year. For my final report last year, I took you through the many steps of the long process of finding a person who appears likely to fit our particular needs at Grinnell College. You remember that I suggested such a person will be a rather rare bird: a specialist who has worked for years to develop a scholarly expertise, but who is able to branch out in teaching the broad curriculum we offer our students and who is able to develop new expertise as the needs of the curriculum shift over the decades of his or her career. A person who wants opportunities to continue to develop as a specialist will probably look for a position in a university. And you'll remember that I suggested location and partner employment can become issues in faculty hiring.

Salaries, of course, also play a part in successful recruiting, and I think we'll need to continue the efforts to improve salaries at the Assistant Professor rank. The faculty salary Budget Committee, you remember, last year favored that rank by acting as if the total 4.5% salary pool were in fact only 4% and using the .5% for the benefit of Assistant Professors in tenure track positions. There was, as a result, a small improvement in the position of our Assistant Professors' average salary in relation to the average of the comparison group. Preliminary data from the AAUP in February showed that in our twelve-college comparison group, our Assistant Professors went from 10<sup>th</sup> position, or 98.18% of the average, to 7<sup>th</sup> position, or 98.62% of the average. We hope that the extra monies you set aside this year for the same purpose of helping Assistant Professors will lead to further improvement in the next year. We hope also in the next year that you will be able to move forward in response to the proposal that the faculty salary Budget Committee developed last year, and reiterated this, of a long-term salary policy of setting our pool at 105% of the average of our comparison group.

This year, however, we have been very successful in our efforts to hire new faculty for next year in that we were able to persuade almost all of our first choice candidates to agree to come. Dean Swartz has perhaps already reported the figures for next year to you, but here are a few of them. Nine new tenure track appointments have been made (Art, Chemistry, Education, English, History, Music, Philosophy, Spanish, Theatre), most of them to fill positions that became vacant last year, but also three which opened up this year as faculty elected to move to Senior Faculty Status. If we group tenure track, term, and fellowship appointments, we have a net gain of seven women faculty and three faculty of color. We also gain, in a way, when faculty move to Senior Faculty Status. This year each of the Fine Arts departments will have faculty members of long standing move to that status: Merle Zirkle in Art, Elizabeth Hays in Music, and Sandy Moffett in Theatre. As they become "Senior Faculty," we'll be able to benefit from their continued presence by drawing on their experience and wisdom, and they in turn will be able to bear down on the scholarly and creative projects that they've had to neglect for so long.

Another success this year appears to be the entering class for 2000-2001. The entire Admission and Financial Aid staff, under Tom Crady's direction, has worked hard and increased our applications. I gather that the new *Viewbook* has also had a positive effect. Again, you may have already heard figures from Tom Crady, but the report to the Admission and Financial Aid Committee at its last meeting of the semester showed increases in numbers of completed applications and, for admits, increases in SAT Verbal scores, in the percentage of students in the top 10% of their high school class, and in the number of students of color. This is all good news to the faculty.

Increasing diversity not only among students, but also among faculty and staff has continued to be a concern. As you know, the President circulated a document on "Diversity at Grinnell" with several new approaches to increasing diversity. One of them, creating the position of Diversity Officer, led to a search

this semester; we have not yet been able to fill that position, but a working group of the President, Jonathan Brand, Katya Gibel Azoulay of the Anthropology Department, and incoming Chair of the Faculty Bob Grey will be working this summer on some specific proposals for increasing faculty diversity. Student concern about faculty diversity led to several meetings which brought together administrators, faculty, and students. Although I wasn't able to be at either meeting, I gather from talking to colleagues that there is misunderstanding among students about the process of allocation of faculty positions and of faculty hiring, and those discussions will need to continue.

We've also this year had several groups continuing the work begun last year on the revision of the *Faculty Handbook* that followed from your revising the College by-laws. Jonathan Brand, Paula Smith, and Don Smith, for the Executive Council, got the work off the ground and also reorganized the entire *Handbook*. This year the Faculty Organization Committee, under the leadership of Sigmund Barber of the German Department, has carried the job further and done a thorough editing with an eye to consistency, conformity to actual practice, and clarity. The Executive Council also brought several proposals related to the *Handbook* to the full faculty: a proposal for amending the time allowed for completion of the terminal degree; a proposed new faculty grievance procedure, developed with substantial help from Jonathan Brand; and, finally, a proposal for amending the *Handbook* itself. The faculty accepted each of these proposals, and at its final meeting of the year, the faculty will also approved the revised *Handbook*.

I think that the most significant change the faculty approved this year, however, was the endorsement at its April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of two proposals related to curricular innovations. The first of the proposals, a year-long joint effort of the Curriculum Committee and the Executive Council, was a working definition for a curricular experiment which would offer interested Grinnell College students the opportunity to engage in a culminating academic experience. The definition is to be more fully developed as a result of our experiences over the next four years. In my general description here, you will recognize what for the past year has been called the "capstone" experiment supported by the Fund for Excellence. We encountered sufficient objection to this term to decide to go back to one coined by a faculty group in 1998: Mentored Advanced Project or MAP. When funds for significant curricular change became available early in 1999, the administration got such change going by working with interested faculty on individual "capstone" projects. But since the curriculum is the special responsibility of the faculty, the Executive Council felt that it was particularly important that the faculty either take charge of the "capstone" experiment already in progress and give it definition by the end of this year or decide that the experiment presented too many problems to continue with it.

The process by which the Curriculum Committee and the Executive Council engaged the community in discussion about this issue is, I think, instructive. The Curriculum Committee discussed the matter in committee during the first semester and this semester broadened the discussion so that, campus-wide, faculty and students would consider two questions: whether Grinnell College should offer a culminating academic experience and, if so, what features such an experience should have. To learn the views of the faculty, Committee members met this semester with each of the academic divisions and, for students, organized a well-attended meeting. The Committee also benefitted from reports on two sessions of an open forum for faculty at which there was cross-divisional discussion. Working with comments heard in these various discussions, the Curriculum Committee then drafted and endorsed a statement of proposals and sent it to the Executive Council. The Council modified the document somewhat, endorsed it, and took it to the faculty.

We argued in favor of a culminating academic experience for several reasons, among them the fact that something like such an experience had been considered by the faculty for many years. The idea really goes back to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the faculty discussed the introduction of senior seminars. That initiative never got off the ground for a variety of reasons, but in the summer of 1998, several groups of faculty got together in Fund for Excellence workshops to explore ideas for advanced seminars, which could take several forms, and other types of educational experiences. What faculty were responding to, as was evident in our discussions, was a sense that Grinnell students often "meandered" through courses in their final year or two. The faculty workshop on transcript analysis that I mentioned in an earlier report came to some similar conclusions about what appeared to be, in the worst cases, students who graduated with a major and "a bunch of courses." Those of us who've had occasion to visit

with Grinnell graduates have heard from them either that they regret not having had a major project while undergraduates here or, if they did, that such a project was a highlight of their Grinnell experience. Finally, in conversations with the consultants who were helping us redesign our *Viewbook*, faculty spoke of the value in students' academic experiences of initiative and independence, of meeting a challenge, of carrying a project to completion, and of the self-confidence that comes with accomplishment. In different ways, then, each of these conversations pointed in the direction of our offering to interested students an opportunity to undertake an advanced academic experience that would bring together previous experience and allow them to undertake a substantial independent project.

But the Curriculum Committee and Council also argued in favor of the proposal for a culminating academic experience, because it addressed needs beyond the ones I've set out so far. We knew, of course, that some Grinnell students already have such experiences: summer research projects in the sciences, other independent research projects, some concentration senior projects, and some department seminars are all good examples. However, setting aside teaching that is part of a faculty member's five-course load, what seems to characterize this sort of experience is that it has been an "overload" for faculty. What also seems to characterize the current independent activities in which students can engage is their proliferation. Our proposal tries to address both of these problems. We're first of all trying to give a common definition to some of this independent work. Possible benefits of such definition would be that it, in a sense, sets a standard that might cause individual faculty to shift their efforts away from a multiplicity of plus-2s, guided readings, independents, internship supervision, etc. to more focused efforts. A further benefit would be that it becomes possible to give faculty credit for directing these focused projects.

This proposal also expands the opportunities for well-defined advanced projects beyond what is currently done and thereby addresses another need that was expressed in some of the divisions and in the faculty forums: the lack of opportunity to do interdisciplinary work at an advanced level. Expanding the opportunities currently available to allow advanced interdisciplinary or interdepartmental seminar projects also represents the direction in which the organization of knowledge in several disciplines has moved. The development of opportunities to do advanced interdisciplinary work might indeed play a part in the attraction and retention of faculty, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The definition approved by the faculty in April proposes that the Mentored Advanced Projects can take a variety of forms, but any form must have five features. The project must be advanced, the culmination of a sequence of previous academic work in one or more disciplines, and intensively mentored by one or more faculty members. A student undertaking such a project will demonstrate initiative in shaping the project at each stage and will produce something that is shared with others.

Part of the proposal approved by the faculty addressed the crucial role that the President and the Dean play in its realization. A rough calculation suggests that supporting 120 MAP projects in a year requires the equivalent of four FTE faculty, although clearly the number of new faculty positions needed to support an ongoing MAP program will only be evident after each department has carefully examined its own curriculum to see where it can re-adjust offerings and open up space for its faculty to direct MAPs. We were pleased that the President and the Dean expressed their willingness to advocate for the addition of new tenure-track faculty positions that may be needed to support a full-fledged MAP program.

The second of the proposals the faculty approved addressed a concern we heard in our many discussions: that other valuable and important academic experiences might be overlooked, because they might not fit the definition that was developing. In particular, faculty members were concerned that new curricular enterprises like advanced interdisciplinary seminars that did not include MAP projects would be excluded from important support and funding. Others were concerned that projects like a division-wide program of summer research with students who are less advanced or the complete overhaul of a departmental curriculum, would be disadvantaged when support is sought from a Fund for Excellence exclusively focused on the MAP project. We need to encourage and support a wider range of major curricular experiments, and therefore the faculty also approved a proposal to ask President Osgood to reserve a portion of the Fund for Excellence to support a wide variety of major curricular experiments at all levels of the curriculum, experiments which would need to be further defined by next year's Executive

Council, working with the Associate Deans.

I think all of this bodes well for the future. We have had a broad discussion of the issues, and we have come to some agreement on how we want to go forward. What we have here are blueprints for change and innovation that should result in some very exciting work.

For my last act as Chair of the Faculty, I would like to follow our custom and introduce my successor, Bob Grey, Professor of Political Science. I am confident that you will have lively and productive discussions with Bob over the next two years.

