

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE FACULTY 2003-2004

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This report has four parts: Part I concerns faculty salaries, Part II discusses the allocation of tenure track openings, Part III summarizes the final report of the two-year strategic planning process, and Part IV... well, it's very short; please just read it.

Part I: Some Issues with Faculty Salaries

Here I offer some useful information, and some less-useful parting thoughts, on the salary determination process.

A. Redressing (once again) the imbalance in faculty salaries by rank

For a second year the Faculty Budget Committee assigned raises with an eye to redressing the imbalance between junior and senior faculty salaries relative to our peers. Various methods of redistribution were considered. The salary model we eventually alighted on assigned a raise to each faculty member that had three components:

- Cost of living adjustment of 1.3% for everyone
- Merit award: \$1000 on average
- Years-of-Service adjustment: 0% for the most senior; 8-9% for the most junior

The resulting average salaries and raises by rank were:

Grinnell Faculty Salaries by Rank 2004-2005*				
	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	AVERAGE	AVG. RAISE
PROFESSOR	\$158,600	\$81,500	\$102,402	2.54%
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR	\$95,600	\$64,900	\$73,964	4.39%
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR	\$71,300	\$50,000	\$60,039	10.99%

* Cohort includes all full-time faculty continuing in the same rank from 03-04 to 04-05, NOT including Librarians with faculty rank or Physical Education faculty.

We have tried to estimate where these raises will land us relative to our peer's salaries. This is guesswork, of course, because until next year we have no way of knowing what raises our peers will offer. Nevertheless, our best guess, based on what peers have done in recent years, is summarized in the table below. Again, this is a guess; if our peers give higher raises than in the last few years our assistants will still be a bit below 100%. If our peers give lower raises — which is more likely given what has

happened to most college endowments — then our assistants will be slightly above the peer average. Only time will tell.

Grinnell Salaries as a % of Peer Average		
Rank	Current year	Next year (predicted)
Full	104.9%	103.1%
Associate	103%	102%
Assistant	95.8%	99.3%

I wish to thank a number of people involved in the process of setting raises this past year. First, I want to thank the Faculty Budget Committee, Victoria Brown, Roger Vetter and most especially Mark Schneider who did all the heavy number crunching. I am grateful to the President and Dean for encouraging the Trustees to sweeten the raise pot above what we had anticipated. Many thanks to the Board of Trustees, who allowed the administration to rearrange the budget to find extra salary money this year. Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to the senior faculty at this college, who endured two years of significantly smaller raises with barely a whimper of protest.

B. How we evaluated faculty scholarship

Exactly what counts in determining the merit scores used to assign each faculty member's raise? The short answer: whatever the sitting Budget Committee thinks *should* count. There are few guidelines to inform the decisions. Consider publications: the Committee reviews a foot-thick stack of paper listing books, edited volumes, chapters, articles, presentations, exhibitions, performances, compositions, essays, book reviews (the list goes on) all of which must somehow be subsumed into a merit score. Clearly the Committee has to establish some protocol among these entries. Yet the only written advice I ever saw on this was a single typed-and-scribbled-upon page, dating back several Executive Councils, that was tellingly labeled "Confidential." In a sense, each new Budget Committee sculpts its own wheel.

So, in the interest of full disclosure, I thought it would be useful to describe some conventions we employed last winter in judging scholarship.¹ Because Grinnell has no codified criteria for what constitutes scholarly activity, these are the kinds of ad hoc conventions that all Budget Committees must make. I no more expect everyone to agree with our particular conventions than I expect John Ashcroft to become Imam of Baghdad. Indeed, the point of identifying them is to give people a chance to confront them directly and openly.² Also, they may be helpful as guidelines (or anti-guidelines) for future

¹ My interest in full disclosure has soared now that I'm no longer Chair of the Faculty.

² This would be an especially good year for open confrontation — I'm on sabbatical.

Budget Committees. In any case, listing these should help explain why your own raise last year was a tiny fraction of what you truly deserved.

Here are three key conventions we employed:

- **A refereed journal article dominates all other (short) forms of scholarship.** The main idea here is that in most areas of the sciences and social sciences, pioneering results tend to appear first in peer-reviewed journals. (In some fields they appear in books.) Some people will disagree with this. One faculty member pointed out, for example, that as a successful scholar matures her publications often shift toward edited volumes because her prominence in the field attracts invitations to contribute. The Budget Committee agreed with this, but was not dissuaded from giving journal articles priority. We presumed that the prominent scholar in question *became* prominent mainly through past journal articles, and that her salary already reflects the rewards for those articles. (At least admire our naïve faith in the system.)
- **In judging books, an edited volume or a text book counts substantially less than original research.** Edited volumes often do contain original research but generally endure a review process that is less rigorous than a journal article. Textbooks can be quite valuable, but they are usually digests of existing research and, moreover, are rewarded through royalties.
- **Book reviews get very low weight as scholarly publications.** I realize that this will be quite controversial since so many Grinnell professors regularly publish book reviews. But while the Budget Committee saw book reviews as evidence of scholarly activity and professional engagement, we did not really accord them the status of scholarly publications. Perhaps this is something the faculty should discuss as a whole.

C. A random question: How much is a raise worth, anyway?

Over the last two years a number of people have advanced different arguments to me about how a given raise will affect junior and senior faculty. For example, I have heard it claimed that a raise is more important to a person near retirement because it determines the level of SFS salary. On the other hand, I have been told that it is unfair for a junior person to get the same *percentage* raise as a senior person for, say, publishing a book because that translates into more dollars for the senior person — she has a higher salary. Comments like these got me thinking about how much a raise is actually worth. That is, how much does a raise of X% change the amount of money someone earns over her career? In particular, how does it differentially affect people at different points in their careers? It is a surprisingly complicated question. (Both of the arguments described above, for instance, sound sensible but do not stand up to careful scrutiny).

So just for kicks I decided to simulate the affect of a 1% salary increase in a given year on total salary payments over the remaining career. I compare two hypothetical people: a new professor with 35 years more to teach, and a mid-career professor with only 15 more to teach.³

Simulation Methodology (*Some people might want to skip this section*)

To measure the impact of a 1% salary increase in a given year we want to observe its effect on the total amount of salary a professor will receive over the remainder of her career. This means that we have to add up streams of salary payment that are occurring in different years. There are two complications when adding up monetary values over time. First, it is necessary to separate “real” salary growth — the change in actual purchasing power — from the effects of general price inflation. Second, we need to convert *future* salary payments into their *present* value, e.g. calculate the value in 2004 of money that will not arrive until 2015.

Measuring real growth in a salary (or any other monetary measure) usually involves deflating the nominal value in a given year to its value in some base year using the annual Consumer Price Index. This is tedious and probably unnecessary in our case. We are concerned with how the real salary rises over the course of a person’s career at Grinnell. We can estimate this real growth by comparing the salaries of junior and senior people at Grinnell in any given year. Consider, for example, the ratio of the salary of the typical 2nd year Grinnell professor in 2004 to that of the typical 10th year professor in the same year. Because inflation is irrelevant to this comparison, the ratio gives some measure of how much one’s real salary grows between the 2nd and 10th year at Grinnell. How accurate a measure? Well, if relative salaries remain constant from year to year, it’s a *good* measure of real salary growth; if they fluctuate wildly it’s a *bad* measure of real salary growth.

From the above, it is obviously important to empirically establish the inter-temporal stability of relative salaries at Grinnell before estimating annual salary growth from a single year’s data. So I conducted a survey. Now, when sociologists and psychologists do surveys they tend to waste lots of money interviewing hundreds of people, whereas we economists are more cost conscious — I asked one person. My sample (I’ll call him “Jim”) felt that relative faculty salaries were “pretty stable” from year to year. That evidence was plenty strong enough for me to feel confident publishing my findings. I estimated the average annual growth rate in real salaries at Grinnell using regression analysis on 2003-2004 salary data.⁴ These data suggest that over the course of a career a Grinnell faculty member’s real salary grows at about 2.05% annually.

³ Does this give you a hint as to how many years I had remaining at the time of this exercise?

⁴ For my fellow members of the Grinnell Geeks Club: this model assumes that the salary, S_i , of average faculty member i in her T^{th} year of service is $S_i = (1+g)^{(T-1)}S_0$, where S_0 is the average starting salary and g is the (constant) average annual growth rate. I therefore ran the linear regression $\ln(S_i) = \alpha + \beta \ln(T_i - 1)$. Estimated regression parameters α and β provide measures of S_0 and $(1+g)$, respectively.

Naturally, a raise in any given year affects salary in all subsequent years and so its full impact must include this effect. However, a dollar five years from now is not worth as much as a dollar today, even absent any inflation. We need to convert this stream of future payments into its so-called “present value.” A convenient way to think of this present value is to imagine all your future salary will be paid from an endowment with the following special feature: once the last paycheck is drawn the fund is completely drained. How much money would an adoring alum have to donate to the college *now* to support your endowment? That required donation is the present value of your future salary payments. Intuitively, the present value must be less than the sum of future paychecks because the endowment dollars will earn interest in the bank while waiting to be drawn out as salary.⁵

Clearly, the present value of all future salary depends upon how much the endowed dollars earn in the bank, and therefore upon the market interest rate. So to calculate present value I need to forecast what interest rates will be over the next 30 years. If I could actually *do* that I would not be writing this memo — I would be watching the sunset from my beach house on Maui. Instead, I employ the standard forecasting technique of using the real rate of interest on 30-year treasury bills. I chose the latest value I could (easily) find: for April 2004, which was 3.22%.⁶ For a base salary my model uses the average starting salary at Grinnell for 2004 which was about \$50,000.

Simulation Results (*Welcome back skippers*)

Now we are ready to see my calculations, which are reported in Table 1A below. The impact of a 1% raise in salary is compared for a junior faculty member with 35 years until retirement and a senior faculty member with 15 years. The table considers two scenarios: 1) one-time raise of 1%, and 2) a raise that is 1% higher every year until retirement. The former scenario might apply to a person who publishes an article that bumps her raise to 3.05% for one year, forever after which she gets the standard 2.05% increment. The latter scenario could apply to a person who publishes an article *every* year and therefore always gets a 3.05% raise. To provide context I calculate a) the additional dollars in the first year, b) the absolute number of additional dollars earned over the remaining career, and c) the present value of those additional dollars. It is measure c) that economists would consider most meaningful.

The top row of the table shows how an extra 1% in raise affects the junior and senior person in its first year. The former gets \$500 and the latter, who has a higher salary, gets \$735. The initial salary impact is higher for the senior person, meaning she gets more additional dollars for the “same book” than her junior colleague. But that is only initially. Over the remaining career the junior person gets nearly twice as many total dollars (look at Row 2) and about 30% more in discounted dollars (Row 3). Economists

⁵ Down at the clubhouse we geeks calculate the net present value, NPV, of the future salary payments of a faculty member with J years left to teach as $NPV = \sum S_j / (1+r)^{j-1}$ where S_j is salary in year j and r is the interest rate. The summation is over j = 1 to J.

⁶ I calculated this as the nominal t-bill rate (5.51%) minus the inflation rate (2.29%).

would say that the 1% raise is “worth” \$14,060 to the junior person and \$10,814 to the senior person.

As expected, these results are somewhat sensitive to the assumed market interest rate. Row 4 recalculates the Row 3 values using 5% instead of 3.22%. With the higher interest rate the onetime raise gives the junior person only about 10% more in discounted dollars than the senior person.

The results in last two columns of the table have unsurprising implications. The decision to become a fanatical publishing (or teaching?) dynamo has a lot larger impact if it is done in the beginning of one’s career than if done in the middle.⁷ A junior person who gets 1% more in salary increments every year will add more than a quarter of a million dollars to the present value of her salary; the senior person will add less than \$100,000.

TABLE 1A Value of a Raise of 1% of Annual Salary				
	Junior Professor 35 Years Left to Teach Annual Salary= \$50,000		Senior Professor 15 years Left to Teach Annual Salary= \$75,025	
	Larger Raise Year 1 Only	Larger Raise Every Year	Larger Raise Year 1 Only	Larger Raise Every Year
Added Dollars First Year After Raise	\$500	\$500	\$735	\$735
Added Dollars Over Rest of Career	\$25,231	\$570,805	\$13,757	\$129,280
Present Value at 3.22% interest	\$14,060	\$264,256	\$10,814	\$93,754
Present Value at 5% interest	\$10,698	\$179,602	\$9,582	\$79,330

It might also be useful to compare the value of a merit *bonus* with that of a merit *raise* of a given percent.⁸ The difference is that the bonus gives a flat dollar amount to each person, and is therefore independent of any person’s salary (or rank). Table 1B calculates the value of bonuses for our junior and senior faculty members. Two bonuses are considered: the \$500 that represents 1% of the junior salary in Table 1A, and the \$735 that represents 1% of the senior salary. The important comparison in Table 1B is between the present value calculations by rank. Note that with a bonus of either size, the present value of the dollars added to the junior’s payments is almost twice that of the dollars added to the senior’s payments. This is not surprising since the bonus will always correspond to a higher percentage raise for the junior person. Thus junior people benefit proportionately more from bonuses of a given size than from % raises of a given size. (This does not suggest that bonuses are better or worse than % raises.)

⁷ Labor economists would say that this is one reason that women get shafted in the academic labor market.

⁸ I am grateful to Jack Mutti for suggesting this comparison.

TABLE 1B
Value of a One-Year Fixed-Dollar Bonus

	Junior Professor 35 Years Left to Teach Annual Salary= \$50,000		Senior Professor 15 years Left to Teach Annual Salary= \$75,025	
	\$500 (1% junior salary)	\$735 (1% senior salary)	\$500 (1% junior salary)	\$735 (1% senior salary)
Added Dollars First Year After Bonus	\$500	\$735	\$500	\$735
Added Dollars Over Rest of Career	\$25,231	37,090	\$9,356	\$13,753
Present Value at 3.22% interest	\$14,060	\$20,668	\$7,355	\$10,811

Part II: Allocation of Tenure Track Slots

This section of my report describes how Executive Council voted last spring on the various requests for tenure track positions. We got 10 requests for tenure track positions from as many different departments. Some were for replacements of departing faculty, some were for new positions, and some were for conversion of temporary positions to tenure track. They are summarized in the table below. The table also notes the Council's recommendation and the subsequent final decision by the President. Please remember that the Executive Council does *not* make the final decision, it makes only recommendations to the Dean and President.

As the table indicates, requests to replace departing faculty in English, Spanish Classics, and Religious Studies were approved without controversy as the replacements were necessary to maintain departmental curriculum. Requests from Music, Sociology and Economics were classified as diversity searches: the departments understood that they would get approved to hire only if a candidate emerged who helped diversify the faculty. In these cases, as the Dean's letter put it, "The Executive Council . . . decided to approve a search under the auspices of a renewed diversity initiative for which several searches will commence, but no positions are yet approved." In other words, permission to search did not necessarily constitute permission to hire. This was in part because it was expected that other departments would likely make similar proposals during the fall hiring season.

The President and the Dean considered Economics to be a special case because the department is under heavy enrollment pressure.⁹ The Dean's letter said that if a search under the diversity initiative was unsuccessful, "[We] may well want to pursue a more standard search to meet the department's curricular and enrollment needs."

A request from the Theatre Department to convert a temporary dance position into tenure track was turned down. The case for expansion in the department, set within the context of the needs of the curriculum at the college as a whole, was not strong. Also, it was not supported by the recommendation of outside evaluators. (In general, the recommendation of outside evaluators greatly strengthens a case for departmental expansion.)

The request from the Classics Department to replace Gerry Lalonde was complicated by an accompanying proposal to fill the slot with someone who had already been teaching (quite successfully) in the department for some time. The Department wanted to waive the usual national search. The Council approved the waiver given that the person in question had such a distinguished record of teaching. Still, as a caution, the letter from the Dean and President outlined a procedure for interviewing this individual that would mimic a more formal search.

⁹ Hey, don't look at me like that, I didn't tell them to say this!

For the second year in a row the Physics Department made a very strong case that, due to adverse conditions in the market for physicists, use of temporary faculty was significantly compromising its program. This year the Council approved an additional tenure track slot. In their letter, the Dean and President praised the department's already substantial effort to recruit a faculty member of color and asked that this be continued for another year. The upshot is that while a new tenure track line in Physics has not yet been formally approved, there is agreement at the administrative level that leave-proofing this department would be a highly desirable.

The final, and most contentious, request we (re)considered was to convert a temporary position in Japanese to a tenure track line. Last year, in a split vote, Council voted against a more ambitious version of this same proposal, at which time the Dean and President invited a scaled-down resubmission. This year the Council again voted (5 to 1) to turn down the request. The point was contentious because the administration strongly supported the proposal and (most) council members strongly objected. The Council was not necessarily opposed to the position on its own merits. The President, along with the proposal itself, made some very persuasive arguments about how the addition of Japanese would improve both the curriculum and campus diversity. Our reasoning was that approving a tenure track line in Japanese was essentially adding a language to the curriculum. The Council felt that such a significant curricular change should be approved by the faculty as a whole. It is true, of course, that the faculty as a whole does not usually vote on new tenure track lines, but right now the College is poised to begin a curriculum review anyway. The Strategic Planning Report recommends the addition of 7 new faculty. Why not, the Council argued, let the Japanese position compete to be one of those added? (I personally think it would be quite competitive.) In the Council's discussion, I pointed out that a number of faculty had indicated to me that they saw the advent of Japanese as an administrative initiative, not the general will of the faculty. I therefore went so far as to invite the President (in so many words) to let the faculty make this decision on its own.

The President appears to have declined this invitation. In his letter to the Department of Chinese and Japanese the Dean says,

President Osgood and I believe that you should work on putting together a more completely formulated curricular plan for the department and concentration which is based upon a single tenure track appointment in Japanese ... and submit that proposal to us in the early fall. We are ready to approve a search providing that you come up with a sound curricular strategy consistent with this staffing plan.

The Dean and President seem prepared to go ahead with a tenure track appointment in Japanese in spite of the Council's overwhelming objection. I think this a bad decision, especially in its effect on faculty morale. My (admittedly uncharitable) interpretation of this is as follows: the administration very much wanted to add this line and was unwilling to subject it to the risk of faculty disapproval. In other words (and even less charitably), they refused to trust us to make the right decision. There are some good arguments for

adding a tenure track position in Japanese and had they been discussed in the formulation of a strategic plan, I think the faculty as a whole might have been persuaded by them. I expect, however, that with the decision having been made by the administration over the strong objection of the Council, the addition of Japanese will be viewed with resentment.

Summary of Executive Council Responses to Departmental
Requests for Tenure-Track Positions, May 2004

DEPARTMENT	REQUEST	EXPLANATION OF REQUEST	COUNCIL REC. (VOTE)	KEY ELEMENTS OF DISCUSSION	FINAL DECISION
Chinese & Japanese	Expansion position	Add Japanese to regular curriculum	Deny position (Split vote)	Reconsider this as part of broader faculty expansion plans	President does not accept recommendation
Classics	Replacement position; fill with local candidate	G. Lalonde moves to SFS	Approve position (Unanimous)	Routine replacement but should there be a national search?	President accepts recommendation
Economics	Diversity expansion position	High enrollment pressure	Approve search, not necessarily position (Unanimous)	Other departments will also be making diversity position requests in September	President accepts recommendation
English	Replacement position	E. Moore moves to SFS	Approve position (Unanimous)	Routine replacement	President accepts recommendation
Music	Replacement position	J. Torres resigned	Approve search, not necessarily position (Unanimous)	Other departments will also be making diversity position requests in September	President accepts recommendation
Physics	Expansion Position	Acute need to leave-proof department	Approved position (Unanimous)	Strong case for leave replacement; good diversity search effort	President accepts recommendation conditionally
Religious Studies	Replacement position	W. Kelting resigned	Approve position (Unanimous)	Council recommended stronger emphasis on Islam	President accepts recommendation
Sociology	Diversity expansion position	Two minority faculty resigned	Approve search, not necessarily position (Unanimous)	Other departments will also be making diversity position requests in September	President accepts recommendation
Spanish	Replacement position	D. Perry moves to SFS	Approve position (Unanimous)	Routine Replacement	President accepts recommendation
Theatre	Expansion position in Dance	Solidify dance in departmental curriculum	Deny Unanimous	Need departmental review before considering expansion	President accepts recommendation

PART III: Final Report on the Strategic Planning Process

Much of my energy as Chair of the Faculty the last two years was expended on the strategic planning process, whose initial phase officially concluded in May. This summer a final report was made to the Board of Trustees. The text of that report is available in paper, by request, or online at <http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/institutionalplanning/strategicplanning/strategicplanning.pdf>.

Rather than write a special summary of the Strategic Planning Report for this memo, I include a section taken directly from that document. There are three good reasons to do this:

1. I am tired of writing about strategic planning,
2. The summary in the Planning Report is perfectly adequate for this purpose,
3. I am tired of writing about strategic planning.

If you have already looked at the Strategic Planning Report, you will certainly want to skip what follows.

A Brief History of the Planning Process

Some perspective on how the proposals in the Strategic Planning Report emerged can be gained from briefly reviewing the history of the strategic planning process.

In the spring of 2002, the Board of Trustees decided to develop a strategic plan for Grinnell College under the guidance of trustee Dr. Clint Korver, co-founder, San Francisco. That fall, President Osgood, with the help of the faculty's Executive Council, constituted the Grinnell College Planning Steering Committee (PSC). The Committee was to be headed by Chair of the Faculty Mark Montgomery and assisted by a Planning Team of administrative support staff coordinated by Jonathan Brand, Vice President for Institutional and Budget Planning. The PSC membership would draw from a wide range of Grinnell constituencies including trustees, administrators, alumni, staff, students and faculty. Table 1 lists the members of the PSC.

Following a planning model developed by Clint Korver, the first thing the PSC did when it met in October 2002 was to brainstorm a set of goals for itself: Why should Grinnell College strategically plan? The goals are listed in Table 5 of the Strategic Planning Report, where we consider what, if anything, strategic planning accomplished.

The next step in the Korver model was to develop a "decision table" of alternative preliminary strategies — more accurately, areas of focus — that the Planning process should consider. By December of 2003, 8 focus areas had been identified:

- Improve the Status Quo; More of Everything
- Focus On Attracting Talented Low-Income Students from Around the World
- Focus On Recruiting Top Faculty
- Focus On Becoming a More Humane Community
- Make Grinnell the College of Choice for Iowans
- Enhance the College's National Reputation
- Make Social Justice a Top Institutional Priority
- Focus on Achieving the College's Mission Statement

The purpose of the table was to speculate about how each strategy/focus would, if adopted, affect such aspects of college life as the composition of the student body, student recruitment and retention, faculty and staff satisfaction, and the college's financial health, among others. This Decision Table was announced and made available, via the internet, for comment by all interested parties. A wide range of people both on and off campus sent comments about the document.

At the Board meeting in February of 2003 the PSC met to discuss community reaction to its Decision Table and contemplate the next step of planning. The result was a set of five full-blown alternative (though not mutually exclusive) proposed strategies for Grinnell:

1. Making Grinnell Tuition Free
2. Providing a Full-Ride for the Most Meritorious Students

3. Building on the College's Strengths
4. Enhancing our Connection to Iowa
5. Enhancing the Student Experience
6. Focus on Recruiting Faculty Who Will Enhance the College's Academic Reputation

The above list makes it clear that the strategies to be explored were not simply minor variations around some most-acceptable common denominator. The list would explore the boundaries of what was feasible for the College to do, and desirable on the part of its constituents.

To make rational evaluation of these 6 strategies possible, the PSC charged the Planning Team with conducting an in-depth analysis of them prior to the next PSC in the fall of 2003. In March the PSC consulted extensively with experts from the offices of Admission and Financial Aid, the Treasurer, Student Affairs, and others to predict the college-wide impacts of adopting these strategies. For example, how much would "Providing a Full-Ride for the Most Meritorious Students" improve the academic credentials of the entering class? How would it affect the diversity of that class? How much would it cost to implement this strategy?

Planning Table 1 Composition of the Planning Committees	
Planning Steering Committee	
Barber, Sig	Professor of German
Barr, Bob	Trustee
Brown, Victoria (03-04)	Associate Professor of History
Brue, Nord	Trustee, Chairman of the Board
Clay, David	Treasurer of the College
Crady, Tom	VP for Student Services
Egan, John	Trustee
Finkelman, Patricia	Trustee
Gregg-Jolly, Leslie (03-04)	Associate Professor of Biology
Kaiser, Dan (02-03)	Professor of History
Korver, Clint	Trustee
Lazier, Bill	Trustee
Little, Caroline	Trustee
Mohan, John (02-03)	Professor of Russian
Montgomery, Mark	Professor of Economics
Mutti, Jack (02-03)	Professor of Economics
Osgood, Russell	President of the College
Rosenberg, Gabe '03	SGA Officer
Schneider, Mark	Associate Professor of Physics
Scott, Helen	Associate Dean of the College
Spence, Anne C.	Trustee
Swartz, Jim	Dean of the College
Thomas, Frank	VP for Diversity
Vetter, Roger (03-04)	Associate Professor of Music
White, David	Trustee
Planning Team	
Baumler, Scott	Associate Director of Inst. Research
Brand, Jonathan	VP for Institutional and Budget Planning
Korver, Clint	Trustee
Sortor, Marci	Associate Dean of the College
Trosset, Carol	Director of Institutional Research
Voss, Karen	Assistant Treasurer

The Planning Team reported its findings to the PSC.

At its August, 2003, meeting, after digesting the Planning Team’s report, the PSC decided it was time to gauge community reaction to the 6 proposed strategies. Consultants from Iowa State University, under the direction of Dr. John Shuh, were brought in to conduct focus group discussions. In September, 16 focus groups met on campus and two were interviewed by telephone. (See Planning Table 2 for composition of the groups.) The point was to identify those elements of the various strategies that the community considered worth exploring in the next phase of planning.

From the focus groups — and a special faculty meeting on this topic held in December — there came some important signals about the community’s view of the alternative strategies. First and foremost, it was clear that Grinnellians happen to like what Grinnell *is* and do not want to see it become something else. Radical change would not be desirable. As one faculty member was quoted as saying, “The best expenditure of resources, both human and financial, is to focus on what we do and make those [things] stronger.” This widely held sentiment ruled out a number of proposed strategic elements. For example, there was little desire to substantially change the student body via a “Full Ride for the Most Meritorious Students”, or “Making Grinnell Tuition Free.” Nor was there agreement to “Focus on Recruiting Faculty Who Will Enhance the College’s Academic Reputation.” People valued Grinnell’s tendency to define excellence in its own terms rather than solely by the traditional measures used at other “elite” liberal arts colleges. Targeting only students with the highest test scores for example, was not seen as consistent with Grinnell’s unique character.

Those strategic elements that generally were favored by all constituents included ethnic diversity and, not surprisingly, good teaching.

From the results of the consultants’ report, the Planning Steering Committee produced a list of 15 ideas and concepts deemed worthy of further consideration as elements of an eventual strategic plan. This was called the “In List” (See Planning Figure 1). It was decided that these could be fruitfully divided into four categories, each of which could be addressed by a special sub-committee constituted for that purpose. The four sub-committees were:

Constituency	Female	Male
Trustees *	4	6
Alumni	4	3
Class of 2004	7	5
Class of 2005	2	2
Class of 2006	2	2
Class of 2007	1	1
Staff	5	1
Senior Managers/Administrators	2	6
Mid-Level Managers/Administrators	3	4
Emeritus and Senior Faculty (SFS)	1	5
Tenured Faculty in Science Div.	2	5
Untenured Faculty in Science Div.	3	3
Tenured Faculty in Humanities Div.	1	5
Untenured Faculty in Humanities Div.	3	4
Tenured Faculty in Social Studies Div.	3	2
Untenured Faculty in Social Studies Div.	3	4

* Trustees were interviewed by telephone

- Re-Emphasizing the Liberal Arts
- Improving Diversity
- Improving the Grinnell Experience for Students, Staff and Faculty
- Rethinking Tuition and Financial Aid Policy

Sub-committee members were drawn from a wide base of campus constituencies, although necessarily relying on local experts in the area under discussion. (See Table 3.) Unfortunately, the goal of completing this document by the April 2004 Board meeting substantially limited subcommittee membership. Meetings had to be held on campus which curtailed participation by alumni and trustees. This was seen as a definite loss to this stage of the planning process, but a necessary concession to the pressure to finish. The sub-committees deliberated for 10 weeks in February and March. They issued their final recommendations in April 2004 which were then discussed by the Planning Steering Committee in early April. Those recommendations constitute the bulk of this Report on the Strategic Planning Process.

Planning Figure 1
Strategic Elements Deemed Worthy of Further Consideration
December 2003

1. Re-emphasize the liberal arts
2. Increasing the diversity of the faculty, students, and staff
3. Rethinking the College's financial aid practices in light of the overall goals of the College
4. Reviewing the "sticker price" of a Grinnell education
5. Improving student life, including wellness, mental health, and residential life
6. Increasing faculty-student interaction in and out of class
7. Emphasizing teaching, mentoring and small group research opportunities
8. Decreasing reliance on temporary faculty
9. Improving the local community economically and physically
10. Offering greater direct and indirect assistance for faculty partner employment
11. Strengthening the relation between the liberal arts experience and post-graduate life, including career development
12. Improving the image of Grinnell College as a place "that is doing good" with its resources
13. Addressing the perception of Grinnell as ideologically narrow
14. Strengthening the international character of Grinnell College
15. Focusing more on recruiting proximate students, including from Iowa
16. Addressing the perception of Grinnell as ideologically narrow and intolerant

An Overview of the Subcommittee Reports

Here I summarize briefly the reports of the four sub-committees. To read their full reports please see the online planning document: <http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/institutionalplanning/strategicplanning/strategicplanning.pdf>, or request a copy of the paper report from the Office of the President.

Re-Emphasizing the Liberal Arts

This sub-committee emphasized the need for Grinnell to harness new interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge. This would require more team teaching across departmental boundaries, expansion of interdisciplinary majors and programs, and more effective use of mentoring relationships. Stronger mentoring is needed not just between faculty and students, but between faculty and other faculty. Most importantly, to truly reinvigorate our liberal arts program we need to have less of our curriculum be taught by temporary faculty. The subcommittee outlines the costs — while acknowledging some benefits — of relying on temporary professors. It therefore proposes the addition of seven more permanent faculty positions.

Improving the Grinnell Experience

This sub-committee agreed with its counterpart above that the College needed more permanent faculty and also approved of creating some cross-disciplinary positions. These two items were considered critical to enhancing the student experience at Grinnell. Enhancing the faculty experience would require more attention to the issues of partner employment (which are acknowledged to be complex and not easily resolved). The sub-committee recognized that the experience of support staff is sometimes ignored when colleges go about making new plans. It recommended that Grinnell find ways to improve staff morale through a greater sense of empowerment in the worker place, and more interaction with other elements of the community, notably the faculty. Finally, the sub-committee made suggestions for improving the Grinnell “community.” This was meant both as the physical community, ways to make the town we all live in better, and the *sense* of community, ways to better interact with each other in our various campus roles.

This sub-committee had the broadest range of issues to discuss, and so proposed the longest list of initiatives.

Improving Diversity

The sub-committee on Improving Diversity affirmed a number of our current practices such as the Posse Program for incoming students, and the use of “opportunistic hires” to snatch up good minority faculty when they are available to us. They also proposed some new practices. True diversity should extend to *what* Grinnell teaches, not just who teaches it and to whom. In other words, we should make efforts to diversify the curriculum at Grinnell, not just the people.

Rethinking Tuition and Financial Aid Policy

The sub-committee had to address only three simple questions: What should Grinnell charge in tuition? How much financial aid should we give? How much merit aid? Unfortunately, these questions are both extraordinarily important in terms of their impact on the college, and extraordinarily hard to answer due to innumerable uncertainties. Tuition and Financial Aid Policy considered three alternative strategies: one that

maintains the status quo, one that increases tuition slowly but substantially, and a third that applies need-sensitive admission criteria to a fraction of the applicant pool. Their final recommendation is to avoid, for the time being, any radical action on tuition and aid. The College had gone through important recent changes including a major upgrading of our physical facilities and increased attention from national media. The sub-committee recommends assessing the impact of these changes on our applicant pool *before* embarking on any new initiatives in tuition and financial aid.

Planning Table 3 Membership of the Special Planning Sub-Committees	
Reemphasizing the Liberal Arts	
Victoria Brown, <i>Chair</i>	Professor of History
Sam Rebelsky	Associate Professor of Computer Science
Don Smith	Professor of History (senior faculty status)
Katya Gibel Azoulay	Associate Professor of Anthropology
Will Freeman	Associate Professor of Physical Education
John Chennette	Professor of Music
Todd Armstrong	Associate Professor of Russian
Elaine Marzluff	Associate Professor of Chemistry
Gail Bonath	Associate Librarian of the College
Diversifying Students, Faculty and Staff	
Leslie Gregg-Jolly, <i>Co-chair</i>	Associate Professor of Biology
Sig Barber, <i>Co-chair</i>	Professor of German
Henry Reitz	Assistant Professor of Religious Studies
Tinker Powell	Associate Professor of Economics
Frank Thomas	Vice President for Diversity
Jon Rommereim	Associate Professor of Music
Adrian Enriquez	Associate Dean of Admission
Michael Sims	Associate Dean of Student Life
Rethinking Tuition and Financial Aid	
Roger Vetter, <i>Chair</i>	Professor of Music
Arnold Woods	Dir. of Student Financial Aid
Jim Sumner	Dir. of Admission and Financial Aid
Charles Cunningham	Associate Professor of Physics
Karen Voss	Assistant Treasurer
Jack Mutti	Professor of Economics
Jim Swartz	Dean of the College
Tom Crady	Dean of Student Affairs
Jacob Kaufman-Osborn	Treasurer, SGA
Improving the Grinnell Experience	
Mark Schneider, <i>Chair</i>	Associate Professor of Physics
Ira Strauber	Professor of Political Science
Sarah Purcell	Assistant Professor of History
Monica Chavez-Silva	Director of Community Enhancement
Deanna Shorb	Chaplain
Erik Simpson	Assistant Professor of English
Liz Allan	President, SGA
Carol Ahrens	Administrative Support Assistant

PART IV: THANK YOU

I want to thank the Grinnell faculty for the honor of serving as their Chair for the last two years. (And for once I am not being facetious.) I especially want to thank my fellow council members: Mark Schneider, Sig Barber, Jack Mutti, Dan Kaiser, Victoria Brown, Leslie Gregg-Jolly, Roger Vetter, and the late-great John Mohan, for all their help and support. I am grateful to Jim and Russell for their unfailing efforts to keep me in the loop about important developments. I want to thank the Board of Trustees for always treating me with utmost respect, and to thank my students for putting up with my frenetic angst over the last two years. Last, but not at all least, I thank the Carnegie Faculty Secretaries: Karen Groves, Linda Price and Stephanie Puls, who never blanched at my frantic last-minute requests. Without them I would have been lost.

I consider myself most fortunate to have worked with all of you.