

Chair of the Faculty Report

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August 20, 2009

Among my first remarks as Chair of the Faculty I expressed a desire to help usher in a greater satisfaction on campus, characterized by cooperation among faculty, and a sense among faculty that we are appreciated for our work. Instead, the past year was a very turbulent and contentious year on campus. Staffing shake-ups in the Division of Student Affairs led to the most heated interactions among faculty, students, and administrators that I have experienced in my 22 years at Grinnell. A shattered economy nationally and globally has led to a dramatic drop in the college's endowment and increased strain on gifts and student financial aid need. And toward the end of the year, we learned of President Osgood's intention to leave the presidency at the end of the 2009-2010 academic year. In this report, I will report on these several unusual events in addition to the more routine duties of my position. Within this framework, as we look forward to a major transition at the college, I will pose some issues that I would challenge the faculty to consider and discuss in the coming year.

Trustee Communications and Relations

One of my responsibilities as chair is to represent the views of the faculty to the Trustees. That is a tall order, for me to represent the entire faculty, so I am pleased there are other venues for trustees to meet faculty. There are regular opportunities for communication with the Trustees: dinners with faculty invited by the President's office typically occur on Thursday evenings of Board meeting weekends, a presentation by one or more faculty members chosen by the Chair of the Faculty usually occurs during a Friday Board session, an informal reception usually occurs on Friday afternoon to which all faculty and trustees are invited, and the Chair of the Faculty makes a presentation usually at a Friday Board session.

In the brief minutes allotted for formal faculty presentations at each meeting I sought to portray the campus as a vibrant place of innovation brought about by a creative faculty and staff. This year, the Board heard compelling presentations from Steve Andrews relating his experiences at Grinnell in Washington, and from Andrew Kaufman, Matt Kluber, and Lee Running regarding the significant changes in the studio art curriculum. I tried to place these specific reports in the context of a long history of academic innovation at Grinnell, innovation generated at least as much from the grass roots as from the top. I also tried to emphasize the necessity of good support for faculty from a variety of corners, especially support for early career faculty.

I am not alone in wishing there were better ways for faculty and trustees to communicate informally, and to come to understand one other. The trustee meetings are so tightly scheduled that it is difficult to introduce more informal ways of interaction. I have suggested to several trustees the possibility of organizing some events following board meetings (which generally end around noon on Saturday) to encourage those trustees with more flexible schedules to remain on campus through Saturday for more informal interactions with the campus community. If the faculty support this notion, I would be

willing to attempt to organize such an event. In addition, if other faculty would like opportunities to either participate in a dinner with trustees, or to give a presentation, I invite them to contact me with their ideas. [In later sections, I will mention some additional faculty trustee interactions.]

Curricular Issues—Programs and Reviews

Although details will be presented in the Curriculum Committee report, this year was a significant year for large-scale changes in majors and programs. This year saw the institution of the Policy Studies concentration in the fall, the transformation of Gender and Women's Studies Concentration to the Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies major, and the institution of a for-credit program to be mounted at the medium security prisons in Newton and Mitchellville.

Executive Council also invested a considerable amount of time in discussion and exploration of the appropriate (and most meaningful) role for Council in decennial departmental reviews. The underlying rationale is simple: the review process should not simply result in a fat document that is filed and forgotten. Instead, Council should be familiar with the broad results of these reviews, encourage departments to formulate constructive plans in response to these reviews, and endeavor to allocate resources (including staff) in a way that regular takes into account the findings of these reviews. Council struggled to find a meaningful way to be helpfully involved early in the review, and to digest the resulting documents.

Through what clearly was a learning process, Council has settled on a trial formula for next year, in which division chairs will serve as liaisons between Council and departments for ongoing self-studies and reviews, which is only a small increase over what is currently required (and is matched by what some division chairs have already been doing). With advice from Council, the dean has reformulated review guidelines with an eye to producing a more logical structure, one that clearly includes a brief summary that is suitable for quick review by bodies such as Council. Ideally, these summaries will also be used as resources in discussion of requests for positions.

It is worth mentioning several other areas of review and self-assessment in which Executive Council has played at least some role. 1) The College's self study of 2007-08, led by Henry Rietz, led into a site visit by representatives of the North Central Association, which resulted in a very positive evaluation. This year's Executive Council met at some length with the visiting committee. 2) Council has engaged in discussions with Dean Marci Sortor about the development of the Expanding Knowledge Initiative (EKI); the economic downturn has provided a pause in implementation (in terms of hiring new faculty) that may well be beneficial in improving our support for faculty who don't fit naturally in departments, and in the decision-making process for choosing new areas to develop. 3) Council heard Dean Gregg-Jolly report on her efforts to implement improvements in the Mentored Advanced Project (MAP) program guided by suggestions from last year's Executive Council and Curriculum Committee aimed at improving the quality of MAPs and expanding participation, especially in Social Studies and Humanities. 4) Council participated in an ongoing review of campus planning especially

relating to classroom spaces for Humanities and Social Studies and Library facilities, led by Marci Sortor.

Budget formulation

This year has been an unusually demanding one for the Budget Steering Committee, the group charged with producing the annual base budget for the college. Just over the period from the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1, 2008) through the end of the calendar year, the value of the endowment dropped roughly 30% in value, and over 40% from its peak value in July 1, 2009. For Grinnell, which supports half of the base budget from the endowment, this drop was potentially catastrophic—and would have been without the cushion of the Capital Reserve Fund. But that cushion was a bit more than used up by the drop, so any further drop in the value of our investments would be terribly destructive to our long-term fiscal health. Fortunately, it appears we may well have passed through the bottom of equity values.

The resulting cuts to the budget for 2009-2010 were relatively modest, compared to those at many of our peer schools. Commitment to maintaining the academic program and our generous financial aid program were always maintained as priorities as modest reductions were imposed virtually across the board. As salaries compose the largest part of the college's expenditures, it was difficult to make significant cuts without any forced layoffs or pay cuts. As a result, our overall budget for 2009-2010 represents only a 2% decrease over 2008-2009, which very closely matches the endowment contribution decrease.

The full budget is quite detailed, and even when the Budget Steering Committee is broken into two subcommittees (an Academic Subcommittee, with two faculty representatives, and a Non-Academic Subcommittee, with one faculty representative), individual budgets still are dealt with in rather broad strokes, relying on individual departments to control the details. The subcommittees gave some general guidelines for cuts to individual departments, and the willing response of everyone on campus to comply during this fiscal crisis was very gratifying, and much appreciated by the committee.

While the next few years for the nation's economy are anything but clearly mapped out, it is very likely that Grinnell is positioned to recover before most of our peers. It will be a missed opportunity if we fail to capitalize on that edge, especially in recruitment of faculty.

Issues of Campus Climate

A number of efforts have been started over the past year to improve campus climate in several regards. First, the year began with an extensive and thoughtful document produced by a group of faculty concerned with missed opportunities to support and enhance diversity on campus. This document was well received, but still awaits a thorough and meaningful response to its challenges. Second, an independent assessment of campus climate is in progress, undertaken by Rankin and Associates (affiliated with Penn State University) and initiated by Elena Bernal as Vice President for Diversity and Achievement. This survey was administered to faculty, staff, and students, and the

results will be available this fall. Rankin and Associates will then work with the college to develop targeted programs to address issues that are revealed.

In a much less analytical way, I have spent a significant amount of time listening to early career faculty this past year. I have attended a few of the meetings of the self-organized Early Career Faculty group, and have made a deliberate effort to hear concerns of new EKI faculty. My conclusion from this experience is that despite a vigorous new-faculty orientation program, and significant mentoring by many departments, there are often issues and concerns that arise for these new faculty members. Moreover, it would be difficult to predict the character of the various needs or concerns, and the responsive role I played of listening to, and then either advising or advocating for, these faculty was a valuable complement to other successful programs on campus. To a similar end, I have organized an experiment for this coming year which we are tentatively calling Faculty Supporting Faculty, in which a volunteer group of experienced tenured faculty members will reach out to a larger group of faculty, and be an additional resource for them. We have a deliberately vague plan of action, so that we can respond to actual needs rather than our vision of those needs; in some ways, this group might be a prototype, or at least informative, for a campus ombuds office as discussed by the Governance Group (the latter is discussed below). An ombuds office would provide a way of extending this support beyond faculty to potentially any member of the campus community; my experience in actively advertising my role of ombudsman (as laid out in the Faculty Handbook) has made it clear to me that there is a need for this broader role, but it is clearly not one that can be established purely from faculty action.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the issue of support for religious diversity has come before Council in a couple of ways. An innocent oversight in the transitions in campus offices this year led to some scheduling conflicts with religious holidays. Steps to remedy that error are already in place, but the incidents have stimulated a review of official policies relating to religious holidays, which has come before Council, and will return to the full faculty in some form. Council also heard of efforts to improve dining options for students observing Ramadan (an issue brought up in a Faculty meeting), which should ease difficulties for those students.

Faculty Handbook Changes and other Faculty Legislation

There were a number of items of faculty legislation passed in 2008-2009 which have long term significance, some of which are Faculty Handbook changes. Those are:

- Reducing the number of merit reviews by allowing the Personnel Committee to generate merit scores in promotion-to-professor reviews.
- Establishment of comprehensive voting rights for faculty, work accomplished by the Executive Council of 2007-2008 and the voting rights committee, especially Sam Rebelsky. (Extensive Handbook changes)
- A change in the contracting sequence for senior members of the Library and Physical Education Department. (Handbook change)
- A special exception on the single-department credit limit for the Department of Chinese and Japanese.

- Establishment of the Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies major and elimination of the Gender and Women's Studies concentration. (Handbook change)
- Establishment of credit-bearing courses for incarcerated students in Newton and Mitchellville.

An ongoing issue in this category is the somewhat thorny issue of institutionalizing long-term part-time faculty positions in the faculty handbook. The goals would be to provide some greater stability for people in such positions, and to establish some form of review process for faculty who clearly are not temporary members of the Grinnell faculty. Council has discussed this issue on several occasions, and a subgroup of Council has drafted some possible changes to the handbook, which will continue to be discussed and refined in 2009-2010.

Long-Term Position Requests

Executive Council considered ten tenure-track or renewable position requests from nine different departments. Those requests were divided into those requesting replacement full-time positions (Classics, Education, History, Sociology, and Spanish), those requesting a full-time expansion position (French/Arabic, Chemistry, Chinese and Japanese, and Sociology), and regularization of a part-time position (Biology). These proposals were also reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Advisory Board for potential impact on the Expanding Knowledge Initiative. Those proposals seen to have significant EKI impact were History, French/Arabic, Chemistry, Chinese and Japanese, and the Sociology expansion proposal.

Given the economic climate, Council took a very conservative approach to these requests, and was strongly disinclined toward committing the college to an expansion until our fiscal situation was more stable. As a result, Council gave unqualified endorsement only to four of the replacement proposals: Classics, History, Sociology (replacement), and Spanish. Council looked with considerable sympathy upon the proposals from Education, Chinese and Japanese, and Biology, but after detailed deliberation was persuaded that adequate support for these programs could be found for an intervening year, and in at least the former two cases, might allow some departmental development that would lead to a stronger proposal in the near future. The French/Arabic proposal was unusual in that the college had already made a commitment (as a result of receipt of a Mellon grant) for an additional two years for this position as a temporary one, so a possible conversion of this position did not pose short term economic risks. Council gave its support to this proposal, effectively establishing a clearly popular program in Arabic, assuming some stabilization of the college's financial situation. Finally, the Sociology expansion proposal was not seen as compelling, especially given our fiscal status.

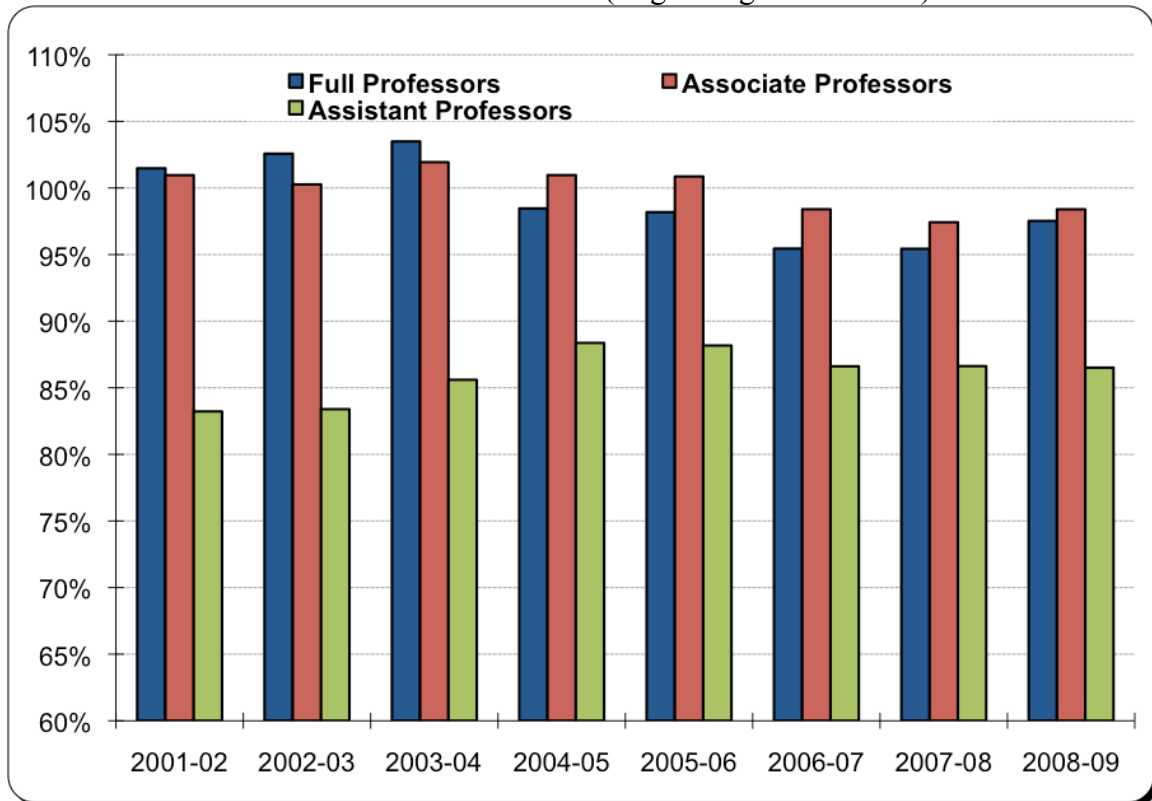
Council also discussed and affirmed its role in tenure-track searches, deciding to continue the tradition of interviews of candidates for long-term positions. Our discussions found value in both gaining information from candidates to forward to search committees, and in communicating directly to candidates the importance of faculty participation in the broader life of the campus (e.g. tutorial and issues of diversity).

Merit Review Process and Salaries

This year, thanks to the downturn in the value of the endowment, the Budget Steering Committee ultimately decided to eliminate salary pools for both faculty and staff. I supported this decision, with the hope that it would make more sense to have the possibility of a noticeable pool next year rather than two microscopic pools in a row. This is especially the case if we wish to have a meaningful merit component to faculty raises.

The merit scores assigned this past year, on a scale from one to five, averaged 3.5. Of these scores, 28 were assigned by the Faculty Budget Committee, and 31 by the Personnel Committee. The average of the scores assigned by the Faculty Budget Committee was 3.6; the average of those assigned by Personnel was 3.3. I find these two averages remarkably close, and closer scrutiny of the actual scores suggests much of the difference reflects a clustering of 3's for Interim Reviews, where the typical faculty member has simply not had much time to develop as a teacher or to produce a strong scholarly record.

Although we have no information to present about how salaries were determined this year, it is important to report the other traditional bit of information contained in the Chair of the Faculty report: how we are doing relative to our peers. The most frequently cited data are our average salaries as a fraction of the average of our peers (Amherst, Bowdoin, Carleton, Colorado, Davidson, Macalester, Oberlin, Pomona, Reed, Swarthmore, and Washington & Lee), by rank. The following data is from Scott Baumler and the Institutional Research Office (originating from AAUP):



(Note the vertical axis has a suppressed zero; the bottom of the bar is 60%.) The most important number to look at is the assistant professor rank. That datum represents the faculty we are most actively recruiting, and those are the faculty who have, over the years, proven to be the most mobile. It is worth noting, then, that our Assistant Professor rank relative to our peers has stayed constant over several years, having peaked in 2004-05. The significant increase in the Assistants' ranking over 2002-2005 came from a very deliberate and dramatic action of the Faculty Budget Committee over two years to enhance Assistant Professor salaries. These efforts were seen as controversial and extreme; I will point out that for at least several of the essentially static years, the Faculty Budget Committee made an effort to direct more resources toward assistant professors, with little change in the rankings. Clearly this suggests that our peers must be following similar reasoning, and therefore to make any significant headway will require dramatic steps.

Is the 86.5% value for Assistant Professors a cause for concern? I would say concern, but not panic. The average of our peers is boosted considerably at all ranks by four schools: Amherst, Bowdoin, Pomona, and Swarthmore. These schools are situated in regions where the cost of living is significantly higher than the remaining eight schools. We rank seventh among the list of a dozen with regards to average Assistant Professor salaries, and certainly are reasonably competitive compared to other midwestern schools, but an institution with our resources and ambitions should top the list of midwestern schools.

What about the Associate and Professor ranks? Can we be content here? Looking at our ranking relative to our peers again, we are seventh at the Associate rank, and sixth at the Professor rank. However, there is some reason to be suspect of these numbers as we seem to promote to Professor at a slower pace than our peers; if we keep faculty at the Associate rank longer, that gives us more highly paid Associates and fewer low paid Professors, which inflates both averages. Moreover, the numbers of faculty at these ranks seem to suggest this promotion rate disparity; ignoring salaries and simply looking at number of faculty at each rank, we seem to have a paucity of Professors. We have 106% of the average number of Assistant Professors, 115% of the average number of Associate Professors, and only 46% of the average number of Professors. Of course there could be a number of other causes, but more rapid promotion to the Professor rank has been a change desired by Executive Council and the upper administration for several years, and I believe progress has been made. As to whether we should promote at a different rate or not, I am largely agnostic, but I do believe we must consider this in looking at salary comparisons at the upper two ranks. In very rough numbers, each year of delay in average promotion causes an increase in salary rank of about a percentage point. I have not heard anyone venture to guess our average promotion delay is more than a few years, which suggests the difference between Assistant Professors and the other two ranks is real, but probably more like five percentage points rather than the apparent ten. This is good news if we simply wish to compare ranks internally, but bad news if we wish to compare to our peers.

I also will take the liberty of making some comparisons between my service on the Faculty Budget Committee this past year, and my service in 2002-2004. First, those

earlier years were the last two years of the annual merit review for every faculty member. I found the reviews we were able to do this year much more valid and meaningful than those of a half dozen years ago, although I would stop far short of calling them flawless. I also note that our current practice has Personnel Committee performing many of the merit reviews, and because of having the responsibility divided between committees separated by duty (Personnel vs. Faculty Budget Committee) or by year (as the Faculty Budget Committee changes each year), the rubric for merit decisions has become very public (web.grinnell.edu/Dean/Reviews/RubricsAssessingMerit.pdf). This has at times been controversial, but in a good way; previous Faculty Budget Committees used similar guidelines which were held largely confidential, did not have endorsement of any larger faculty body, and which could be subject to capricious change.

I also want to make comparison of my qualitative assessment of faculty response and interest in the review process. To put it in simplistic terms: no money, no interest. I find this rather disappointing, as I believe the only valid justification for a merit process is to induce us to become better at our job. Lack of interest on the part of faculty suggests either we collectively are disinterested in becoming better (a possibility I vigorously reject), or that the process does little to provide substantive and useful feedback and support. This causes me to ask two questions: 1) if this burdensome review process really does so little good, is it worth the effort at all, and 2) could we construct a review/development process that would truly be helpful if we were to separate it from salary determinations? To expand on this latter possibility, it seems, because of salaries, we may be so constrained by our sense of fairness (Does a textbook count, and if so, how much compared to a monograph, or a work of fiction? How much is an article in a chemistry journal worth compared to an art show in Santa Fe? What if a coach also writes poetry?), that we lose the ability for, or at least sight of the goal of, encouraging the kinds of scholarly productivity that the faculty member feels are most satisfying and influential.

Events Relating to Student Affairs

For the benefit of a potential reader a decade hence, I will outline the events of the past year relating to Student Affairs; virtually everyone else on campus knows and has well formulated opinions about the details. A new Vice President for Student Affairs, Houston Dougharty, was hired in the spring of 2008. Mr. Dougharty brought some changes to the Division of Student Affairs; among those changes, he removed Sheree Andrews, a faculty spouse, from her position of Associate Dean and Director of Residential Life. While Ms. Andrews removal was formally (and to my understanding, legally) resolved in negotiations with college administration, considerable concern and suspicion lingered among a sizable group of faculty, whom I will call the group of concerned faculty. The group of concerned faculty called into question a variety of actions within student affairs, especially relating to staffing decisions. These were brought to a head in a lengthy letter from the group in the *Scarlet and Black* in December 2008. These concerns resonated with a number of students who had a wide variety of concerns relating to Student Affairs, leading to a public meeting in December, moderated by students in which questions and issues were raised, addressed primarily by members

of the administration. This meeting ended in some heated and provocative exchanges between several faculty members and administrators.

While all faculty members I spoke to were concerned at these events, there were strong divisions over the appropriate response to them. A particularly divisive question was whether it was appropriate for faculty to independently investigate events, or simply express concern to administrators and Trustees was sufficient. Perhaps naively, I attempted to keep a relatively neutral position and to fulfill two of my charges as Chair of the Faculty: to “represent the opinions of the faculty to the Trustees,” and to “act as an ombudsman... within the College as a whole.” Following that tumultuous December, I injected myself deliberately in events, attempting to maintain frequent and active communication with Trustees, faculty, and administrators, and lobbying for resolution of tensions, mutually positive outcomes, and protection of faculty rights. Tensions ratcheted up at the February board meeting, which involved some direct faculty discussions with key board members, and a presentation from Student Government Association leaders to the board that among other things expressed concerns about student-faculty relations in the fallout from events. I was taken aback by the SGA presentation, and at the meeting promised to take their concerns seriously and work with them to understand and resolve these tensions.

The Board, having heard concerns expressed from many quarters, felt compelled to make a response to the college community. About a week following the Board meeting, the board sent a note to the campus that expressed confidence in the president, concern for students, and endorsement of the principles of free speech and confidentiality in personnel matters. This unusual step by the Board engendered a range of faculty emotions, from those who saw it as a pro forma response to the situation, to those who saw it as potentially threatening to faculty independence.

Also following the Board meeting, I met individually with SGA leaders, and they came to an Executive Council meeting where they made a presentation and engaged in a discussion with the full council; I also related the concerns expressed by SGA at a faculty meeting. In these discussions, it became clear that in general the tensions between faculty and students fell into a rather gray area, with specific events few and typically ambiguous. In the highly charged campus atmosphere, a [probably small] number of students felt caught between their relationships with faculty and those with Student Affairs. While I do not regret taking the SGA concerns seriously, I do regret presenting those concerns to the faculty in a way that suggested my independent corroboration of them, or evidence of a serious and systemic problem. My comments also came at a time that they could reasonably, but incorrectly, have been interpreted as support of the administrative position; I should have made it clear that my comments were a response purely to SGA concerns.

The issues raised by the group of concerned faculty were not resolved, and reached a peak in April of 2009 with open accusations of the administration raised during a sequence of faculty meetings (the first a regular meeting, followed by two special meetings). These meetings preceded the April Board of Trustee meeting, and proposals

were brought forth calling for the Board to take a very active role in on campus administrative decisions. The members of Executive Council, along with a number of other faculty members, saw considerable danger in asking the Trustees to become involved in campus affairs at a micro level, and in a sequence of meetings between the special faculty meetings, Executive Council crafted a series of counter-proposals that charged Executive Council with overseeing similar goals; ultimately none of the proposals were passed by the faculty, although Executive Council, to the extent that one year's Council can commit the next, made clear its intention to follow up on the contentious issues. As of the time of writing this report, several detailed sets of minutes (including some word-for-word transcription) of faculty meetings remain unapproved; I have heard persuasive points on both sides regarding whether those minutes should be accepted in current form or reduced in scope. I feel the details must be preserved in some accessible form as a historical record, but as for the official minutes, that decision must rest with the faculty as a body. I have great reservations about making the full transcript, in searchable form, available on the web.

There is no question that the events of the past year have shattered the calm and good will on campus. However, some positive developments have ensued from this turmoil. As a result of the concerns raised, I have taken a more deliberate approach to my role as ombudsman, reaching out to all members of the Division of Student Affairs. Also, a working group looking at the structure of faculty governance was formed through discussions between representatives of Executive Council and the group of concerned faculty; this so-called Governance Group, chaired by Kelly Herold, will continue work in the fall; likely crafting a proposal for an expanded ombuds office or program. Finally, in an effort to provide a lower pressure venue for frank faculty discussion, I organized a sequence of informal discussions in parallel to official faculty meetings, the goal of which was to allow exchange of ideas without Robert's Rules or faculty legislation; these have been well attended and by all reports resulted in significant and positive discussions of thorny topics. Clearly this is a format deserving of continuation in the fall.

I have taken several lessons from these events to carry into the coming year. First, it is clear that my role as ombudsman is non-negligible, and one that I should continue to pursue actively. I see considerably desirability in expansion of that role to include other senior faculty; the independent and easy access of the Chair of the Faculty to Trustees, Council and upper administration persuades me that the chair should be a part of any future system. Second, it has been a sad revelation to me that some faculty on campus have little confidence in the traditional channels of faculty governance; clearly Executive Council should be seen and serve as a natural and effective conduit for faculty to express concerns and effect resolution of those concerns. Third, the need for better forums for communication and discussion among the faculty, and between Council and the rest of the faculty, is clear. My efforts to establish those forums electronically have been largely failures; however, I have considerable hope in the informal discussion format developed at the end of the semester.

Presidential Search

Early in May of 2009, President Osgood announced to faculty his intention to step down from the presidency at the end of July in 2010. This announcement occurred at the last faculty meeting of the year, which left few opportunities for faculty to discuss the nomination of faculty members to serve on the presidential search committee. In an expedited sequence of e-mail and meetings by the Faculty Organization Committee and Executive Council, and an informal discussion of available faculty, a slate was produced collaboratively by those two committees. That slate was approved by e-mail by a majority of faculty. After some false starts and delays, a final committee was announced by the Board of Trustees at the end of July, chaired by Trustee Paul Risser '61. Faculty representatives on the committee are Jan Gross, Elaine Marzluff, Jack Mutti, and Dan Reynolds.

One auxiliary benefit of this process was that it developed and tested a model for faculty electronic voting. We had flexibility in this case because this was neither an official election (but rather a recommendation to the Trustees), nor a procedure described in the Faculty Handbook. The success of this method might well be extended to use of e-mail or other internet tools to enable faculty off-campus to participate in elections, although this would require Faculty Handbook revision.

Final Comments

I willingly took on the role of Chair of the Faculty with the hope that this position would allow me to present the issues and interests of the faculty, as well as my own concerns, in a direct and unvarnished way to the President, the Dean, and the Board. I have attempted to be honest and direct in those communications, and I am grateful to all of those aforementioned individuals for the patience and respect they have always accorded me, even when we disagree. This position has also given me greater opportunity to express my own thoughts on issues of costs and finances in higher education to the community outside of Grinnell, including participation in a Congressional Roundtable discussion. I still retain my perhaps naïve optimism that even the wrenching trials and financial woes of the past year may well help us join together in a deeper understanding of how to truly improve Grinnell College. And with the transition to a new presidency in the near future, there could not be a more auspicious time for discussion and action.

All faculty depend on our dedicated support staff; I greatly appreciate the assistance to me as chair that came from all of the support staff in the Dean and President's offices, and from Karen Wiese and Angela Winburn as secretaries for Council and Faculty meetings.

I wish to express my gratitude to all faculty who serve the larger college—on committees, as department chairs, by leading programs or centers, and by being willing to help cheerfully in the many ways, small and large, that we are asked to contribute throughout the year. For me personally, the service of the members of Executive Council (Joe Cummins, Bill Ferguson, Kathy Jacobson, Clark Lindgren, and Barb Trish) has been essential; they worked tirelessly and selflessly throughout the year, and they provided me with a consistently blunt and honest sounding board, while giving me unfailing support.