

Report of the Chair of the Faculty Academic Year 2002-2003

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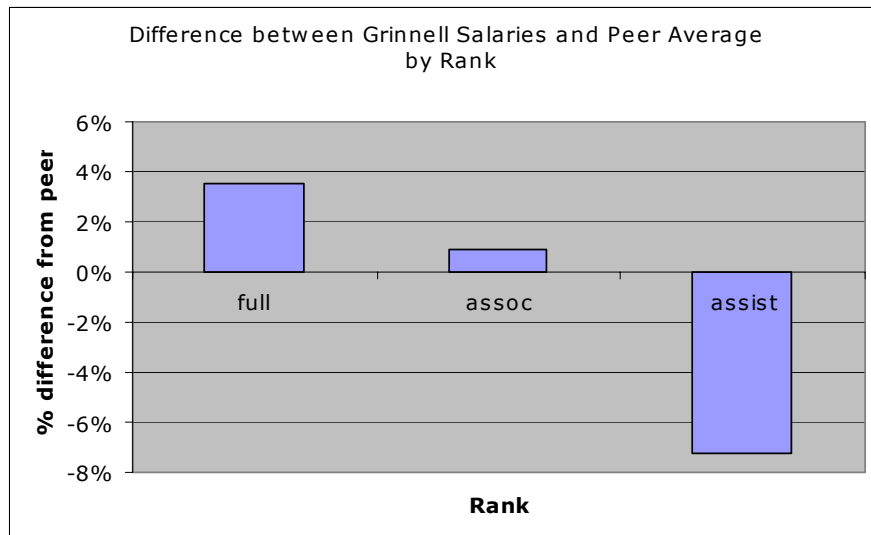
This report covers what I consider to be the 4 most significant developments that affected the Grinnell Faculty last year. Much of the material is culled from earlier reports.

- I. Improving the Relative Salaries of Assistant Professors
- II. Strategic Planning
- III. Reforming the Salary-Review Process for Full and Associate Professors
- IV. Allocation of Tenure Track Slots

I. Improving the Relative Salaries of Assistant Professors

Assistant professors at Grinnell have lower salaries relative to their counterparts at peer schools than do more senior faculty. The figure below, for example, shows that in 2002-2003 Grinnell's full professors and associate professors earned 3.8% more and .9% more, respectively, than fulls and associates at our peers, but Grinnell assistant professors earned 7.2% less. It is true that these ratios are sensitive to when and how relative salaries are measured, but the problem has persisted over the last several years.

This year the Faculty Budget Committee tried to address this salary gap by shifting some of the raise pool from more senior to more junior faculty.



Source: Mark Schneider

We divided the recommended raise into two parts: a base component that everyone gets and a merit component based on an individual's teaching, scholarship and service. This is standard procedure most years, but this year we let the base component of the raise be inversely related to years of service at the college. The more recently one was hired, the higher the base raise would be. For example, consider a full professor who arrived at Grinnell in 1963 and an assistant professor who came in 2001, both of whom earn average salaries for their respective ranks. Under this year's formula the former would get a base (non-merit) raise of about 2% and the latter of 8.6%.¹

What about the merit portion? To determine the merit portion of the raise the Budget Committee scored people based on accomplishments of two types: scholarship and service. Scores ranged from 0 to 3 in each category. To get a 3 in scholarship, for example, one needed to publish a major, single-authored book or multiple articles in good refereed journals. A single conference presentation or chapter in a book might get someone a 1. (This exposition is quite

¹ The formula used was as follows:

$$(\text{Percent Raise}) = .0193 + (1.6) * (\text{Normalized Merit Score}) + [4500 / ('01-'02 \text{ Salary})] \text{EXP}\{-(\text{Years at Grinnell})/8\}$$
. The Normalized Merit Score is the individual's score divided by the average score.

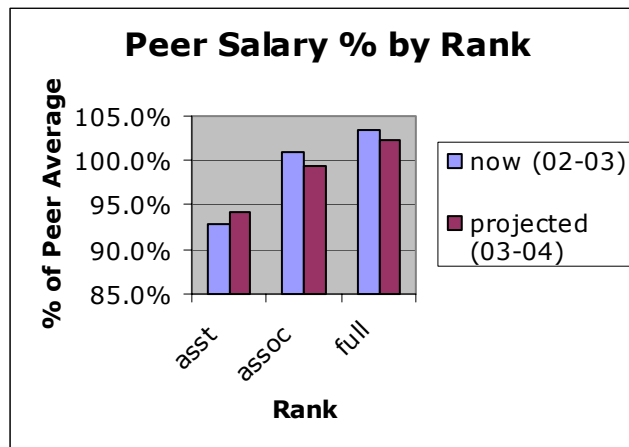
oversimplified, of course.) Overall, the average score for scholarship was 1.35. Of the 131 faculty evaluated, 36 got a score of 2 or higher, 61 people got a score of 1 or less.

In service, one would get a 3 for, say, chairing a department during an especially difficult year or serving on a high-burden committee like Personnel. Service on a single committee of lesser impact might result in a 1. The average score on service was 1.38. Of the 131 faculty evaluated, 47 people got a score of 2 or above and 65 people got a score of 1 or below.

In calculating the final merit score scholarship was given a weight of .6, service a weight of .4. The raise pool approved by the trustees for this year amounted to 5% of faculty salaries plus \$1000 per assistant professor. Applying the merit and base scores to this pool of money resulted in the following percentage raises for faculty by rank.

Rank	% Raise
Professor	3.9
Associate Professor	5.5
Assistant Professor	10.1

How much did these differential raises narrow the relative pay gap by rank? Because we have yet to get actual salary data from peer institutions we cannot answer that question. The *projected* salary ratios, based on the assumption of a flat 5% increase across the board at peer schools are shown in the chart below.



The chart suggests that we expect to make some progress this year in closing the gaps but that relative salaries are still out of balance.

II. Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning has finished its first year by producing a list of 7 potential strategies for consideration by the Grinnell community including students, faculty, administrators, alumni and trustees. A document describing these strategies in detail is available on the web at <http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/institutionalplanning/strategicplanning/> under the heading “Possible Strategies to be discussed by the Community”.

On September 19 a group of educational consultants from Iowa State University will conduct focus group interviews on campus. The purpose of these interviews is to gauge campus reaction to the ideas proposed in the various strategies. The groups interviewed are as follows.

STUDENTS (5)	FACULTY (6)	ADMIN. (3)	OTHER (2)
1 st Years	Tenure-Track Science	Senior	Alums
Sophomores	Tenured Science	Mid-Level	Emeriti
Juniors	Tenure-Track Social Science	Junior/support	Trustees
Seniors	Tenured Social Science		
Seniors	Tenure-Track Humanities		
	Tenured Humanities		

The consultants will deliver a report about community reaction to these strategies to the Planning Steering Committee in early October.

III. Reforming the Salary-Review Process for Full and Associate Professors

Last Fall the faculty instructed the Executive Council to propose a reform of the way in which we evaluate the performance of professors and associate professors for the purpose of assigning raises. This section of my report — drawn mainly from an earlier document sent to the faculty — poses and answers some questions about this reform. Specific details of the new proposal will be brought to the faculty for final approval this Fall.

To briefly summarize the proposed change: Under the current system, each year the faculty Budget Committee assigns a merit score for each faculty member after reviewing Faculty Activities Reports (FARs) and letters from the Department Chairs to assess accomplishments in teaching, scholarship and service. A raise is assigned by the Dean on the basis of that year's merit score. Under the new system, one third (or one fourth) of all senior faculty would be reviewed every 3rd (or 4th) year in greater depth. The associated merit score would be used to assign all raises for the next 3 (or 4) years. (See diagrams below.)

Why Do We Need Reform?

There are several problems in the way we review senior faculty. First, it has proved difficult to include any criteria for evaluating teaching besides end-of-course (EOC) evaluations. In recent years even those have not been used. Second, because the merit system focuses on yearly faculty activities reports (FARs), we rarely get more than a “snapshot” of anyone's contribution. Third, the feedback mechanism on senior faculty performance is confined to a numerical raise plus a sentence or two in a salary letter. This system is far different from the intensity with which we evaluate junior faculty (except for the single instance of a senior member being promoted to full professor).

Naturally, it is impossible to conduct yearly reviews for all faculty of the kind used for tenure and promotion, the burden would be crushing. Consequently we propose a review process for senior faculty that mimics that for junior people: relatively intense reviews conducted every three or four years. For salary purposes, the outcome of these interim reviews would supplant the yearly evaluation of FARs. A key feature of this reform is that the review would include a discussion with the dean of the individual's progress since the last review, as well as plans for development before the next one. Evidence suggests that such a discussion, which is entirely missing from our current system, is a substantial help to the morale of the person under review.

How Would the Review Be Conducted?

The review can be conducted by the department chair, another designated senior faculty member, or a team from the department. For instance a review of a very experienced faculty member might be assigned to a similarly experienced colleague as opposed to a newly tenured and new chair.

What information would be collected?

Teaching:

The faculty member will prepare a three-year set of goals and reflect on the past three year goals. Summarizes any teaching accomplishments (1-3 pages)

Department chair or designee will sit in on at least one class session.

Department chair or designee will review EOC evaluations for the past three years.

Department chair or designee will meet the faculty member to review the statement goals and accomplishments and past three years of end of course evaluations. Additional information could be sought if needed or desirable.

Scholarship:

The faculty member will prepare what amounts to an extended FAR. It will list scholarly accomplishments for the past three years and annotate them with respect to the significance of the accomplishments. An additional written statement will reflect upon the achievement of scholarly goals from the past three years and articulate new ones for the next three years. Scholarly accomplishments and goals will be reviewed in the discussion with the chair. We do not anticipate the use of outside reviewers.

Service:

The extended FAR mentioned above will include a list of service activities (both on and off campus) for the three-year period, annotated with respect to the significance of the accomplishments.

Materials Sent to the Budget Committee:

The Budget Committee will receive: 1) the Faculty member's goal and self-assessment document, 2) an extended FAR covering the previous 3 years, 3) a summary of EOC evaluations, and 4) a salary recommendation from the department chair or designee. On the basis of these materials the Budget Committee will recommend a merit level (from 0-5) for the next three years. The Budget Committee will provide this information to the dean and chair along with a letter explaining the rationale for the merit level.

It is expected that in a multiyear review the Budget Committee will focus more on broad trends in performance than does the current system. The merit score will be less dependent, for example, on what scholarship has happened to reach print in a particular year. Progress on long-term scholarly projects will receive greater weight. Also, the evaluation of teaching can take better account of, say, anomalous student reactions to pedagogical experiments.

Meeting with the Dean:

The Dean will meet with the faculty member and discuss the process, accomplishments and goals. They will review the letter from the Budget Committee. They will also discuss resources needed for the next several years to achieve those goals. This is a key feature of the multi-year review.

How Would Merit for Instructors and Assistant Professors Be Handled?

For Instructors and Assistant Professors, we would assign a standard raise except when a review is conducted (normally in years 2, 3, and 6) and the Personnel Committee would assign the merit score at the end of the review process. Assistant professors would submit a brief Faculty Activity report in the years that they were not being reviewed and a longer one in the years when they are being reviewed. An alternative formulation would have the assistant professors retain their merit score through years four and five, as do other faculty members.

Would Multi-Year Reviews Require More or Less Effort than the Current System?

There is some uncertainty but in the long-run it should require a roughly similar amount. During the first years of implementation it will require more. In long run equilibrium, senior faculty will first generally become subject to this type of review three years after receiving tenure and every three years thereafter. If we count the faculty who are three or more post tenure, then take one third of that, we should get a number averaging around 30 per year. That is comparable to the number of cases, ranging from interim review to promotion to full professor, that the Personnel Committee sees in a year. The Personnel Committee deliberates on these cases somewhere between 22 to 30 hours. The merit reviews contemplated in this document should not be more time-consuming than an interim personnel review, probably less so. So the evaluation cost is likely to be less than is currently devoted to personnel reviews. This year the Budget Committee spent at least 20 hours assigning merit scores to 131 faculty members. We expect the reformed system to be about comparably expensive.

How Would these Reforms be Implemented?

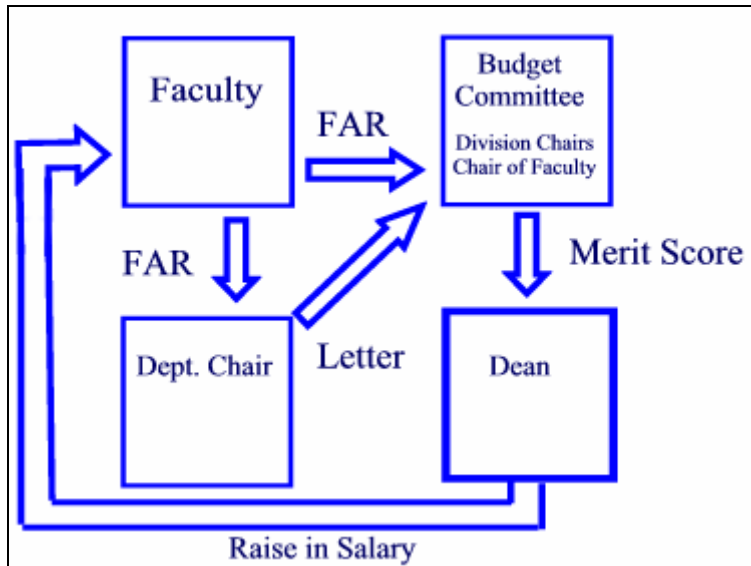
Obviously it would be necessary to phase in this procedure as it will take 3 years for the entire senior faculty to pass through the first review. Moreover, since a key purpose of these reforms is to encourage planning and reflection on the part of senior faculty, the first to be reviewed should have ample warning before the change. For these reasons we propose to conduct the first reviews in the fall of fall of 2007. Those to be reviewed would be chosen (at random) from among those tenured faculty who will be more than 3 years from SFS or retirement by 2007. Those not getting the new treatment during transition will be reviewed as always. This will place substantially more onus on the Budget Committee during the transition, but only for 2 years.

What Are the Advantages of the New System?

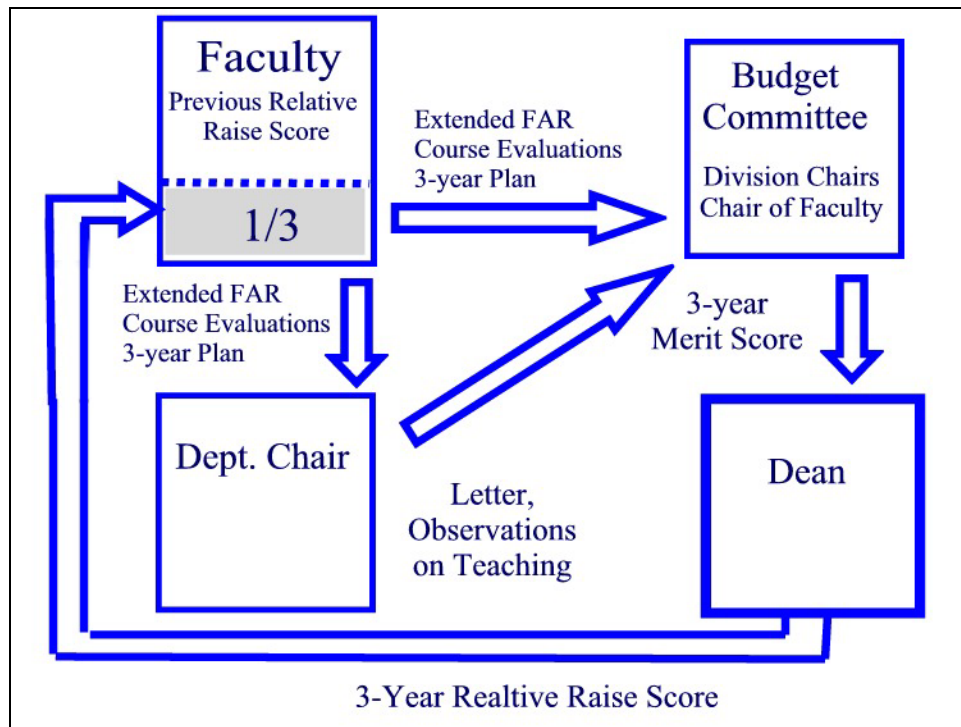
- A single 3 year review is likely to provide more insight into a person's contribution than 3 of the current cursory reviews.
- It is often said that the virtue of a merit raise is as much the recognition of achievement as it is any extra money. The system proposed here strengthens that component of merit.
- As mentioned above, a 3-year review process gives more recognition to long-term scholarly projects. It also reduces the risk of pedagogical innovation that might result in temporarily lower teaching evaluations.
- The raise pool is uncertain from year to year. Consequently, the current system has a lot of "noise" — three articles in a low-raise year may do no more than one article in a high-raise year. A 3-year review cycle will smooth out much of this.

What are the Disadvantages?

- It takes up a great deal of the Dean's time
- It *may* require more effort on the part of the department chair or designee
- We may be putting more "pressure" on ourselves to perform.



Old Model of Review for Senior Faculty



New Model of Review for Senior Faculty

IV. 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 13 such requests for tenure track positions, or parts thereof, from 12 departments. Some were for replacements of departing faculty, some were for new positions, some were for expansions of shared contracts, 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. Please bear in mind that the Executive Council does *not* make the final decision, it makes only recommendations to the Dean and President. A set of comments on individual cases follows the table.

To identify the context in which these requests were considered I quote from the Dean's letter to the departments announcing the decisions.

“The context of Council's discussion was that we have recently seen substantial expansion of the faculty, in part in anticipation of a modest expansion of the size of the student body (from about 1310 to 1340). Our current student-faculty ratio is relatively low, and our income streams are not growing rapidly. We are in the process of developing a strategic plan. Some of the possible plans would put substantial downward pressure on student revenues, which would require reduction in expenditures. The endowment is not growing, and, in the current economic climate, dramatic growth of unrestricted gift income is not likely. We are currently not in a mode of growth of the size of the faculty.”

In that spirit, and with charity toward all and malice toward none, the Executive Council considered the following proposals.

Summary of Executive Council Responses to Departmental
Requests for Tenure-Track Positions, May 2003

DEPARTMENT	REQUEST	EXPLANATION OF REQUEST	COUNCIL VOTE	KEY ELEMENTS OF DISCUSSION	FINAL DECISION
Art	Replacement position	T. Crowley departs	Approve Unanimous	Routine Replacement	Approved
Chemistry	Expansion position	Need to staff new Biological Chem. major	Deny Unanimous	Bio Chem major can be covered with existing staff	Denied
Classics	Make temp. permanent as replacement for Lalonde	J. Lalonde goes to SFS if position approved	Tie w Abstentions ²	First need to justify Lalonde replacement; not exigent	Denied for now reapply next year
Economics	Expand a shared contract by 3 courses	Enrollment pressure	Approve Split Vote w Abstentions ¹	Less flexibility in staffing, but formalizes a de facto situation	Approved
Education	Replacement position	J. Jansen departs	Approve Split Vote	Routine Replacement	Approved
Japanese	Make FFE temporary position permanent	Add Japanese to regular curriculum	Deny Split Vote w Abstentions	Enrollments too small to justify position; will require second hire	Decision postponed until after Strategic Planning
Library	Replacement position	R. Graff departs	Approve Unanimous	Routine Replacement	Approved
Mathematics	Replacement position	C. Jepsen goes to SFS	Approve Unanimous	Routine Replacement	Approved
Mathematics	Expand a shared contract by 3 courses	Gives staffing flexibility	Deny w Abstentions	Unnecessary, Math recently expanded	Partially Approved (expand by 1 course)
Philosophy	Replacement position Early Modern Phil.	M. Rosenthal departs	Approve Unanimous	Routine Replacement	Approved
Philosophy	Replacement position Anglo American Phil.	K. Van Uhm departed last year	Approve Unanimous	Routine Replacement	Approved
Physics	Expansion position	Leave proof – serious problems with temps	Tied w Abstentions ²	Good case, but some reluctance to commit to leave proofing	Denied (unless diversity hire)
Religious St.	Expand a shared contract by 1 course	Needed to staff GWS	Deny Split Vote w Abstentions	Dept. recently expanded; GWS staffing unresolved; wait	Denied

¹ Abstentions include Montgomery and Mutti (conflict of interest)

² Abstentions include Schneider (conflict of interest)

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL DECISIONS

Requests to replace departing faculty in Art, Education, History, the Library, Mathematics, and Philosophy were necessary to support the department's curriculum and were approved without controversy. Some more complicated decisions were the following.

Chemistry

The Chemistry Department asked for a one position expansion, primarily to cover some courses that will be needed for the newly instituted Biological Chemistry major. The Council thought it was in general a nice proposal. But, as the Dean said in his letter to the department, "[w]hile the department might have to do some rearranging of its course offerings in order to adjust to changes in the institution of the Biological Chemistry major and the institution of different chemistry requirements for the Biology major, those changes appear possible with roughly the current staff levels."

Classics

The Classics Department proposed to convert one individual's temporary position to a tenure track by the means of Jerry Lalonde moving to SFS. (Jerry's move would be contingent upon the tenure track offer to this person.) The individual in question has a long history of excellent teaching in temporary assignments at Grinnell. The Executive Council saw the logic of the proposal but, in a split vote with abstentions, declined to approve it. As the Dean's letter to the department stated, "[Executive Council] found the proposal did not focus upon justifying the need for the department to retain the position ... The Council suggested that the proposal be resubmitted next year with a more thorough analysis of the department's curriculum and course offerings that would help them to understand why a replacement is important to the college."

Economics

This is a bit embarrassing because the shared contract approved for expansion was ... well ... mine. (And Tinker's). The shared contract of Montgomery and Powell was expanded from 7 courses into separate full-time contracts. Was Council following *Boss Tweed's Manual of Personnel Management*: those with political influence get the good jobs? In any case, the Department justified this request by noting that, due to sabbatical leaves, Montgomery and Powell nearly always teach fulltime. Moreover, with only 6.4 regular FTE positions and more than 80 Economics majors, the department is under intense enrollment pressure. Needless to say, Jack Mutti and I abstained from voting on this proposal. Still, because two other proposed expansions of shared contracts were turned down this year, I would understand if this decision raised a few eyebrows.

Japanese

This was a complicated and difficult case. The Department of Japanese and Chinese wanted to submit a grant proposal to the Japan Foundation requesting initial funding for a tenure-track position in Japanese, which position would ultimately become part of the College's base budget. It was an extremely well-crafted proposal, nicely explaining how making Japanese a permanent part of the curriculum would strengthen our offerings in non-Western languages and, more broadly, in East Asian Studies. Moreover, much of the early funding would come from outside sources. The authors — Ed Gilday, Scott Cook, Jin Feng and Todd Armstrong — did an excellent job with this proposal.

Why then did council vote against it? I must confess that I was a leader of the opposition to this proposal, in spite of my admiration for its authorship. And I'm afraid that my objection was simple and unimaginative: Japanese has low enrollments. The 4 courses offered in Japanese in the fall 2002-2003 garnered only 37 students in total; the 5 courses offered in the previous year enrolled only 44 students in total. These are small numbers to claim an entire new tenure track line. Moreover, Council members felt that one faculty member in Japanese would not suffice to support the language in the long run — we would eventually need another. Faced with the real possibility of declining resources, to me it seems risky to invest in Japanese now. We all know how academic institutions work: In five years time it will be much easier to decide that we *do* need Japanese and add it than to decide we *don't* need Japanese and cut it.

In spite of (admittedly weak) opposition from Council, however, this proposal is far from dead. The Dean's letter stated,

“The President and Dean have considered the Council discussions and have concluded that a final decision on this matter should be deferred until the strategic planning process is further along. However any such a commitment would be made on the understanding that multiple-year external funding would have to be acquired before a tenure-track position would be filled. It is possible that this decision could be made in time for a submission to the Japan Foundation in December, 2003.”

I maintain my position that adding a new language to the curriculum is not the best use of our resources at this point. I would be interested in hearing other faculty views on this question.

Mathematics

The Math Department proposed to expand a shared contract from 5 to 8 courses. Council approved only an expansion to 6 courses however. In the past decade the offerings of the Math department have increased by more than a third and Council was not persuaded that further expansion of the department was justified. This was especially true in light of the recent hiring of a tenure track position in Statistics.

Physics

This was an interesting case that forced the Council to directly confront an issue that has been hovering over the faculty for some time now: leave proofing. The Physics Department requested a new tenure track position on the grounds that in recent history use of temporary positions has led to serious pedagogical problems. They argued that market for new Ph.D.'s in Physics is such that filling temporary positions with good candidates has proved increasingly difficult. This problem has apparently been driving some students out of the Physics track. Nevertheless, the request was not approved. The Dean stated

“The Council is convinced that the department has made as good as case as could be made and, in fact, likely as good a case as any department at the college could make for leave proofing. This year the Council had an analysis of the budgetary costs of leave-proofing for use in its considerations. While there was considerable support for the department’s proposal, the Council concluded that at this stage, it was not ready to recommend leave-proofing.”

The vote was split on this and I was in the minority that favored the proposal (though not without some reservations). The budget numbers mentioned by the Dean do indeed indicate that leave-proofing would be enormously expensive. On the other hand, my work in strategic planning has shown me how unhappy the students are with the continuous flow of temporary faculty. And I, like the Dean, believe that the case made by Physics is as strong a case as any department is likely to make for leave proofing. So I was prepared to use Physics as the test case of a department that was immune to temporary hires. But I admit that such a decision was risky. It raises the issue of how to say “no” to leave-proofing requests of other departments, or, barring that, the question of how to finance campus-wide leave proofing.

Still, I predict that issue of leave proofing will not go away any time soon.

Religious Studies

The Department proposed to expand a shared contract from 8 to 9 courses by having it absorb the Religious Studies course vacated by the resignation last Spring of Sylvia Thorson-Smith. As the Dean’s letter put it,

“The issues of staffing the GWS concentration are up in the air, and should be discussed in the near future. The Council decided that at this point it was not prepared to make a long-term commitment to this expansion, but that such an expansion on a year-by-year basis might well be feasible.”