

Personal Statement for Dean of Faculty Search
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The faculty of Connecticut College is justly known for its exceptional work preparing students for scholarship, service, and work in the world beyond the stone gates of Mohegan Avenue. But, we now stand at a critical juncture in the College's history. A drop in revenue caused by declining enrollments, starting two years ago and projected to persist for the foreseeable future, requires us to craft a plan for a financially sound and stable future. All divisions across the College will be asked to maintain high standards with less. In the Dean of Faculty division this will require a smaller faculty to continue to provide the transformative educational experience on which the College has built its stellar reputation. Moreover, we the faculty must accomplish this feat while successfully launching the Connections program, pursuing our institutional commitment to diversity and full participation, addressing the concerns of parents and students regarding the cost and relevance of a liberal arts education, and navigating a fractious political climate.

Despite this daunting financial context and the challenges of academic restructuring, daily interactions with faculty give me confidence in our collective ability to emerge stronger than ever over the course of the next four years. One of my first aims as Dean of Faculty would be to engage the faculty, particularly through the shared governance structure, in a systematic review of the optimal size and organization of the faculty and academic units. It is vital we do this in a manner consistent with our policies and procedures; only with the commitment and creativity of the faculty will such a project succeed. Through clear and consistent communication in a range of formats, I would strive to cultivate the shared purpose so essential for an undertaking of this magnitude.

In virtually every stage of my career, I have played a leadership role. At a previous institution, I served often as department chair, chaired a major standing committee, and chaired the division of social sciences. In my capacity as committee and division chair, I participated in the Senate, the deliberative body for all matters concerning curriculum and faculty hiring, review, tenure, and promotion, and also served on search committees for President and Provost. In a context of strained relations between the faculty union and administration, as well as significant rifts within the faculty itself, I learned to negotiate conflict and seek productive resolution while maintaining good relations with faculty and administrative colleagues.

I arrived at Connecticut College in 2008, tasked with leading the Department of Anthropology. My basic approach was to listen, to acknowledge history and past conflict, then work to develop consensus around a shared commitment to the student learning experience. I am proud to say that over the next six years my departmental colleagues and I re-structured the curriculum and infused it with new life, transformed the student experience, and hired and mentored exceptional new colleagues. Little did I know, when I went on sabbatical in fall 2014, that I would return to campus as a full-time administrator. But when asked, I readily accepted

the opportunity to contribute at an institutional level, having been inspired by the creative leadership and unfailing support of the Dean of Faculty.

For the past three years, as Associate Dean of the Faculty, I have devoted much energy to supporting departments and programs in various ways, from hiring adjunct and visiting faculty, to facilitating the self-study and visiting committee process for nearly a dozen departments and programs, to addressing all manner of issues from the mundane to the confidential. I have striven to respond to any query or request in a timely manner, listen and learn, develop feasible solutions whenever possible, and explain the basis for my decisions, especially the hard ones.

Particularly relevant to the position of the Dean of Faculty, I have developed productive relations with the offices of the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion on hiring processes, Title IX, and campus climate. I work closely with the office of the Dean of College on the implementation of the Connections program, coordinate with Human Relations on hiring processes and faculty-staff relations, and meet regularly with the office of Finance and Administration on facilities needs for faculty and the allocation of staff positions. I have coordinated most of our programs of faculty professional development and supported our involvement in the C 3 program as well as other efforts aimed at supporting an increasingly diverse faculty and student body. My participation on various committees and working groups, such as those concerning NEASC accreditation, Connections, and the Strategic Plan, have provided me with a solid grounding in institutional planning. This wide-ranging experience has given me a comprehensive view of the College, which I would put to use in the service of effectively solving problems and fairly representing the faculty at this challenging moment.

As Dean of Faculty working on a near daily basis with senior administrators from other divisions, I would advocate for improved spaces and facilities for research and teaching, better collaboration between the curricular and co-curricular aspects of the student experience, and broader implementation of full participation in and out of the classroom. I would also strive to secure the resources required to recruit and support the development of teacher-scholars committed to, and representative of, the institutional goals of the College.

In my administrative work—whether with faculty or administrators or staff or students—I rely on my academic training as a cultural anthropologist, being attentive to listening and observation, and resisting formulating conclusions until all voices are heard. If I were to become Dean of Faculty, my first order of business would be to listen, systematically, to the faculty.

As Associate Dean, I have learned from and supported the faculty. This has been profoundly gratifying and intellectually stimulating work, the character and pace of which accord well with my skills, experience, and temperament. It would be a great challenge and honor for me to serve as the Dean of Faculty, and I would represent the interests of the faculty to ensure a productive work environment in the service of the mission of the College.