Minutes of the meeting on August 24, 2006
of the COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY

We convened at 4:10 in KJ 222. Present: Debra Boutin, Esther Kanipe, Sam Pellman (chair), Joe Urgo, Nat Strout, Kevin Grant

We discussed how to proceed with our review of the curriculum adopted by the faculty in 2000—in particular, the Sophomore Seminar program.

Nat Strout asked the chair to investigate concerns that some faculty have had regarding the promptness of updates to the online copy of the Course Catalogue this past summer.

We were then joined by Prof. Jim Bradfield, at his request, for a discussion of the charter of the Alexander Hamilton Center.

ADDENDUM to the MINUTES
of the August 24, 2006 meeting of the
Committee on Academic Policy

Subsequent to the meeting, at which we offered our advice to Prof. Bradfield for conveyance to his colleagues, the co-founders of the AHC, we drafted a memorandum to the co-founders (copied to the dean and the president) in which we reiterated our concerns and offered further advice. In particular, we continued to be concerned about the governing structure of the AHC as outlined in the Charter presented to us. While we had no reservations about the intellectual value of the proposed project, we were unanimous in our opposition to the unprecedented degree of autonomy that the Charter would provide to a scholarly project hosted by the College. After the initial appointment of the Board of Overseers of the AHC, neither the Dean nor the president would have any role in the replacement of Board members. We recommended that new Board members be appointed with the approval of the president.

We were also concerned that the Charter would permit the appointment to the Board of as few as one member of the faculty (the Executive Director). We suggested that the Charter be amended so that at least three members of the board at any given time be appointed by the president and that one of these be a member of the Hamilton faculty who is not the Executive Director.

Another concern was that the Charter would not provide a clearly-defined process for the reappointment of the Executive Director that would involve the dean. We recommended that the Charter be amended to specify that the Director's term would be renewed on the recommendation of the Board of Overseers and with the approval of the dean.

Finally, we noted that the Charter includes a provision for its amendment at any time by unanimous vote of the Board of Overseers, thus providing an apparently unchecked means by which the roles of the dean and president in the governance of the AHC could be nullified. We recommended that the Charter stipulate that amendments be approved by the president.