

COUNCIL OF THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

December 8, 2008

Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community held December 8, 2008 in 101 Friend Center. Present were Council members Ms. Ainslie, Ms. Chen, Ms. Chism, Professor Cook, Ms. Dickerson, Professor Draine, Mr. Durkee, Provost Eisgruber, Professor Fiske, Mr. Fraisse, Ms. Hudleston, Ms. Hultholm, Ms. Kaplan, Ms. King, Ms. Lang, Dr. L'Esperance, Professor Lyon, Dean Malkiel, Ms. McGinty, Ms. Metro, Mr. Mosteiro, Mr. No, Ms. Noya, Professor Nunokawa, Mr. Parameswaran, Ms. Rosen, Ms. Saliccioli, Mr. Schiff, Ms. States, Professor Strauss, Ms. Thrall, President Tilghman (chair), Mr. Mike Wang, Mr. Weinstein, Professor Zakian, Mr. Zumbetta; Ms. Halliday was secretary.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion made and seconded, the minutes of the November 10, 2008 Council meeting were approved as they had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Question and Answer Period

The meeting began with a question from Ms. King about the University's commitment to affordable housing. Mr. Durkee, the Vice President and Secretary, who oversees community and state affairs, said that the actual obligation for the University continues to evolve, based on discussions with the state and local communities and mindful of challenges to the current set of State-imposed obligations. He explained that under guidelines established by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), the University is required to build low-cost residences in the surrounding community in proportion to the number of jobs that each new building on campus is expected to create. Both the University and local municipal officials have challenged the formula used to determine the obligation as generating estimates that are too high. For example, according to the current formula, the creation of Whitman College would result in 500 new jobs, not the 50 or so created in reality. Mr. Durkee also gave examples of current affordable housing projects which the University is supporting. The University is participating now in a Borough affordable housing project on Leigh Avenue. The five affordable units being constructed at that location represent more than Princeton's current obligation, and we will receive credit toward future obligations. In the Township, the University is also assisting with the planning and construction of new community housing.

Update on Student Housing

The first agenda topic concerned student housing, and the presentation began with a report on a survey conducted last spring by the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) following reassignment by the Housing Office of upperclass dormitories to Whitman College. Brian No '10 said that the survey results from the 800 undergraduates who replied showed that there was little student support for the decision to annex parts of Spelman and Little Halls to Whitman College. From a broader perspective, what the survey underscores are the importance of consultation with students about housing changes and the complexity of making choices about

housing assignments when there are so many potentially contradictory benefits to be considered. He pointed out that the rooms annexed to Whitman College had been part of upperclass draw and it was not clear whether students who opted into Whitman College had done so only to have a better chance at obtaining a bigger room. He closed by saying that the USG continues to look for ways to work with the University for the best housing options for undergraduates.

Assistant Vice President for Facilities Chad Klaus noted that there has been virtually no precedent on which to base these decision since the four-year residential college system is new this year, and the meal plan options have been considerably changed for this year. This creates multiple challenges for predicting demand for housing options. The Housing Office conducted a survey in late fall to help answer some of these uncertainties and to help plan for the future as the new Butler College dormitory comes online. While the deadline for responses was just passed, he had preliminary data to report (a copy of the powerpoint presentation given by Mr. Klaus at the meeting about survey results is attached as Appendix A).

The return had been good – 44% of the entire undergraduate body responded. Two top demand factors for all classes are rooming with friends and the size of the room followed by the location of the dormitory and whether it is new or renovated space. As expected, the percentage of students who want singles increases in junior and senior years. The interest of undergraduates in living in a residential college was 16% in the Class of 2010 and 30% in the Class of 2011. As suggested by the previous USG survey, interest in Spelman remains high at 16% in the Class of '10 and 18% in the Class of '11. He also reiterated the desire of his office to work with students on these issues, especially as new housing arrangements evolve.

Before turning to questions, Mr. Klaus addressed a different topic related to housing. Graduate students had asked about the University's commitment to housing for them in the future. As described in the 10-year master plan, Hibben-Magie and Stanworth apartments are being renovated and converted for graduate students, and the University is maintaining its commitment to housing 70% of graduate students. But he said that forecasting past 2016 can only be done as the impact of the current plan becomes clearer.

Questions for Mr. No and Mr. Klaus followed. There was more discussion about future plans for graduate student housing. Mr. Klaus confirmed that there are no immediate plans for renovating the Graduate College, and given economic circumstances, that is unlikely to change soon. Graduate students are concerned about finding living accommodations in the community, and it was noted that while the University tries to provide housing for 70% of graduate students, experience shows graduate student demand for on-campus housing can peak at 78%. Mr. Klaus mentioned resources developed by the Housing Office to help students find housing in the community, including the availability of staff members to consult with graduate students. Web-based resources have also recently been enhanced, and Mr. Klaus underscored that the Housing Office welcomes graduate student suggestions.

Other discussion focused on trying to gauge capacity in the dormitories system-wide. Next year, with Butler College dormitories opening, the University will be in a better position than this current year because it should have more bed spaces. But in terms of a steady-state situation, the University will meet its goal for the larger class size (1310/class) with next year's

entering freshman class. That means it will take four years before the University reaches a new steady state. Mr. Klaus reminded the group that the dormitory renovation program anticipates that every year some set of dormitory rooms will be taken off line for major renovation, thus reducing the available bed spaces. In an exchange with the President about the impact that student demand for residential college space may have in assigning dormitory space to colleges, Brian No agreed that it is important for the University to address student demand and if possible even anticipate it. As the Housing Office survey seems to be suggesting, the size of a room matters a lot to students, perhaps more than whether or not it is in a college. For some students, annexing part of Spelman to Whitman College may have met that student demand. The concern, though, that students have expressed is their desire to be consulted early in the decision-making process about such decisions, and they reiterated their desire to working with the Housing Office on dormitory allocation.

Update on Study Spaces

Matt Kinsey, Associate Director for Planning and Administration in the Office of the Executive Vice President, then gave an overview of study space on campus following an assessment done in summer and fall. His office is collaborating with the USG on this project. Information came from a survey on study habits issued by the USG to which 750 students responded; a space-by-space review; interviews with stakeholders; cost estimates; and information from peer institutions. The study reveals that between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. students end studying. The top choices for study space are the student's own room, Frist Campus Center, and Firestone Library. The choices are driven by a variety of goals or priorities including access to a printer and IT support, and they are trying to understand these variables better so any changes made can address these desires. He mentioned that the assessment will help inform renovation plans for Firestone Library. Lengthening the hours for Firestone would require additional resources, but they are looking at models to judge impact. He thanked USG President Josh Weinstein for his help in the study.

Following up on one of Mr. Kinsey's comments about the need to advertise availability of study spaces, the President asked whether there was a website that could capture that information to help make students more aware of possibilities open to them. One of the issues that had come up in the assessment concerns spaces within the Residential Colleges. Information about these study areas has been posted to college websites, but thanks to efforts from USG, that information is now more broadly available on POINT. Ms. Campbell, the Director of Campus Life Initiatives in the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life, offered to put the information on the Campus Life website.

There was also wide-ranging discussion about study space possibilities in academic departments. It was noted that interest in these spaces is underrepresented in the survey because fewer upperclass students responded. Mr. Kinsey had referenced in his report the opening of the Lewis Science Library and efforts to set hours there to a 2:00 a.m. closing. Other science libraries are a resource for late-night studying. It is true that in some of the experimental science facilities, like Lewis-Thomas, research work continues throughout the night which might make these locations less useful as study space. But departmental lounges can offer quiet study spaces.

Graduate students asked that the Vice President's office also take into account in the overall assessment the requirements of graduate students especially during summer and break periods. Just as pressure is easing up on undergraduates after exams, it is beginning to be experienced the most intensely by graduate students who are grading exams and papers. To meet deadlines, they also need quiet work spaces and for longer hours. They remain on campus in the summer, so it is important to consult them as hours are set for that period. They also remarked that for them access to food is important in deciding where to study, and they suggested that consideration be given to extending hours of Café Vivian in the summer. They are working with Dining Services on a vending machine study to see whether machines can be added to different areas and provide healthier options. There was also discussion about the relatively high importance to the relatively few students who have carrels of maintaining longer accessibility to facilities like Firestone Library where carrels are located. Students keep reference works in their carrels, so they are at a real disadvantage when they can't have access to these quiet study spaces. The Vice President's office was encouraged to "weight up" these answers.

The President thanked Mr. Kinsey for his helpful report. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Halliday
Secretary