Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community held February 10, 2014 in Betts Auditorium of the School of Architecture. Present were Council members Ms. Banks, Professor Bhattacharjee, Mr. Brannon, Professor Braverman, Ms. Brown, Ms. Buff, Ms. Cherrey, Ms. Clifton, Ms. Dressel, Mr. Dromboski, Mr. Durkee, President Eisgruber (chair), Ms. Funk, Professor Haykel, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Johnston, Professor Kastner, Mr. Kugelmass, Provost Lee, Dr. Leifer, Ms. Libraro, Ms. Lv, Mr. McDonough, Professor Meyers, Professor Morel, Mr. Morrell, Ms. Nutchern, Mr. Okuda-Lim, Mr. Robertson, Ms. Shahbender, Ms. Stoneman, Ms. Taguchi, Professor Woolf, Ms. Wright, Professor Wysocki, Mr. Zhu. Ms. Halliday was secretary.

Approval of Minutes; Introduction of the Next Dean of the Graduate School; Meningitis B Update

The President called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m., and after the roll call he asked the Council for approval of the minutes of the meeting of December 9, 2013 which had been distributed in advance of the meeting. The minutes were approved. Before moving to his presentation for the town hall meeting, the President covered two brief topics.

He introduced Dean Russel’s successor as Dean of the Graduate School, Sanjeev Kulkarni, Professor of Electrical Engineering and Director of the Keller Center, who will take office March 31. He noted the many teaching awards that Professor Kulkarni has received, his scholarly accomplishments, and his time as the Master of Butler College. Professor Kulkarni, who was appointed to the faculty in 1991, said he hoped to think creatively about ways to advance the graduate student experience and urged those with suggestions and comments to reach out to him.

The President then introduced Vice President Williams for an update on the University’s response to meningitis B. No new cases have been reported. The clinic to administer the first dose of a vaccine against the disease for undergraduates and certain other individuals on campus had been remarkably successful with 92% of those eligible taking part. Ms. Williams urged all to return for the second dose of the vaccine to help ensure that the vaccine can be fully effective. The second dose will be administered the week of February 16.

Town Hall Meeting and Strategic Planning

The President then summarized his priorities for second semester including moving forward with the arts and transit neighborhood, continuing his listening tour, and beginning a strategic planning process. The meeting focused on the last priority which had begun with the January Board of Trustees meeting. The slides to his presentation (found at this link: http://www.princeton.edu/vpsec/cpuc/Strategic-Planning-2-10.pdf) serve as an outline to his remarks which are also summarized in this Communications Web story: http://www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/S39/20/78A19/index.xml?section=topstories.

He began by noting that, for Princeton, the point of a strategic planning process is to create a flexible, iterative and practical framework for allocating University resources and assessing and prioritizing new initiatives and identifying evolving needs and challenges. He gave examples of
questions the process might address and underscored the aim to develop a framework for discussion and evaluation of proposals, not to establish frozen goals. The process is conceived of as an iterative one involving Trustees and campus-level committees, taking advantage of existing committees. As an example, he pointed to the Faculty Advisory on Policy (whose members are the faculty on the CPUC Executive Committee), a standing faculty committee, which he intends to use as a sounding board.

The President discussed what he believes are “mission-defining” values for the University and significant trends, happening around the University, that will likely impact higher education. Princeton aspires to be a world-class university with a distinctive emphasis on undergraduate liberal arts education and doctoral education, which offers a small number of small, high-quality master's degree programs in a warm, inclusive and engaged community; which is affordable for all admitted students and adheres to its informal motto of “In the Nation's Service and in the Service of All Nations.” Other characteristics include an endowment-driven budget; a beautiful, walkable, suburban campus; a small scale; and reliance on government revenue for sponsored research. He placed emphasis on the trend of growing inequality in the United States and the rest of the world. Given this kind of inequality, Princeton must “justify everything we do on the basis of its relationship to the common good. We need to be thinking, as an institution where every student and faculty member who comes onto this campus is blessed by virtue of the opportunities that they have, about how we translate that position into things that matter for the common good.”

The President gave examples of how the University contributes to the common good and called for renewing Woodrow Wilson’s ideals as expressed in the University’s now expanded informal motto, “In the Nation’s Service and in the Service of All Nations.” The President suggested four areas to explore that could further this goal:

- **Sustaining and enhancing scholarly excellence that makes a difference in the world:** How do we build financial support for world-class research and innovation? How do we fortify the humanities at a time when they are both urgently needed and under siege from policymakers? How do we ensure that graduate students have the resources they need to become scholarly and professional leaders? On what schedule do we renovate or replace Princeton's research, teaching and residential facilities?
- **Making strategic academic investments:** Where does Princeton have the greatest opportunity to provide teaching and research relevant to long-term issues of fundamental importance? For example, can Princeton do more to answer basic scientific questions about sustainability and the environment or do more to meet the demand for knowledge about society, culture, politics and economics in diverse regions of the world?
- **Enabling more students to contribute to the world in more ways:** When should we expand the undergraduate student body again (to address scarcity while preserving Princeton's distinctive culture and sense of community and ensuring that we have needed capacity in residence halls, academic departments and student services)? How can we reach more students from low-income families? For example, should we create a transfer program that could attract military veterans and community college students? How can we respond to the demand for international exchange programs and realize the benefits of international diversity?
• **Making leadership, citizenship and service central to the Princeton experience:** How can we make public service a defining part of the Princeton experience? How can Princeton itself take a global leadership role in higher education?

Members of the audience offered comments and suggestions drawing on their own experiences. Faculty commented on the importance of pursuing research and teaching to address ecological and environmental challenges and the need for the University to support faculty colleagues from other countries who face persecution. The President noted that the University has world-class departments focused on ecology – Geosciences; EEB for example. An immediate challenge for the University falls into the category of enhancing infrastructure to ensure that researchers have the facilities and equipment that can properly support their work in these areas. He reiterated the University’s commitment to maintaining the excellent quality of the faculty in general, noting that the University does not rely on adjunct, non-tenure-track faculty, which has become a practice at other institutions. Princeton believes that tenure promotes excellence both in teaching and in research. He agreed with comments that one way the University might serve the common good is to invite faculty from repressed societies or war-torn countries as visitors to campus.

Students praised their experience in classes that link coursework with opportunities to make real-life contributions to the common good through community-based learning. They noted the work of the PACE Center to help students pursue such goals and urged the University to support these efforts. They underscored the importance of early and effective communications with students – including graduate students – about the importance of community services and to make sure that graduate students are included in these efforts. Alumni also can help further these goals and have helped by offering summer internship programs that promote community service.

In the discussion about trends deserving ongoing attention, one faculty member pointed to the increasing imposition of regulations on all parts of society, which require sometimes more staff and more faculty time. Fast-paced changes in information technology require attention to IT infrastructure, and the burgeoning importance of “big data” was mentioned as one particular area worth watching. The President was also asked how entrepreneurship fits into the University’s future planning. He noted the current widespread student interest in entrepreneurship, and agreed that Princeton will need to think about the curriculum and pedagogy in light of changing opportunities and technologies.

In a discussion about the rising costs of higher education, the President differentiated between higher education and other parts of the economy. Labor-centric universities have great difficulty realizing economies of scale and are subject to higher inflation than other “goods” or “services” in part because of the central mission to improve continuously teaching and research. While the costs of higher education are high, over time graduates are able to realize very high returns on this investment. The more important problem he sees for Princeton is scarcity. Princeton offers tremendous resources and opportunities, but only a very small number of individuals can take advantage of a Princeton education or one like it. He also referred to a recent White House gathering on access for low-income students to an education like Princeton.
In response to a question about graduate student housing, the President noted that housing has to be viewed in terms of a broader set of issues that relate to how the University supports graduate students, using its limited resources to make the most impactful improvements.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Halliday
Secretary