Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community held November 11, 2013 in 010 East Pyne building. Present were Council members Ms. Banks, Mr. Brannon, Professor Braverman, Mr. Brown, Ms. Buff, Ms. Cherrey, Ms. Clifton, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Dressel, Ms. Dromboski, Ms. Du, Mr. Durkee, President Eisgruber (chair), Ms. Funk, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Johnston, Professor Kastner, Mr. Kugelmass, Provost Lee, Mr. Leifer, Ms. Libraro, Ms. Lv, Mr. McDonough, Professor Morel, Mr. Morrell, Mr. Okuda-Lim, Ms. Riihimaki, Mr. Riley, Mr. Robertson, Ms. Shahbender, Professor Starr, Ms. Taguchi, Professor Woolf, Ms. Wright, and Professor Wysocki; Ms. Halliday was secretary.

Approval of Minutes; Question and Answer Session

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 September 30, 2013 which had been distributed in advance of the meeting. The minutes were approved.

There were no questions when the President called for questions later in the meeting.

Council for International Teaching and Research: Global Partnerships

President Eisgruber introduced Professor of History Jeremy Adelman, Chair of the Council for International Teaching and Research, who had been asked to update the CPUC on global partnerships underway or being developed through the council (the website is at http://www.princeton.edu/international/partnerships/council/). Through an evolving network of partnerships the council is developing courses and collaborative research initiatives, identifying a number of “hot spots” where partnerships are most likely to develop at the moment. The council focuses on vertical integration of mutual research interests and horizontal diversity of involvement of more than one department. The partnerships depend on co-governance structures rather than building satellite Princeton University “campuses.” These partnerships grow out of faculty interests and existing collaborations with international colleagues. Professor Adelman gave several examples to illustrate these partnerships:

University of Tokyo: This university is at the top of the rankings among Japanese institutions of higher education; it has resources to commit to partnerships and includes faculty who have collaborative research initiatives already with members of Princeton’s East Asian Studies Department and the Department of Electrical Engineering.

Humboldt University: long-standing ties have existed between this university and Princeton’s Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures and partnerships focus as well on International Law through LAPA and the European Union through the Woodrow Wilson School.

The University of Sao Paolo: this institution is unlike Princeton in size (over 200,000 students are enrolled) and structure but supports a range of projects of interest to Princeton faculty including research field work in the Amazon River basin.
Professor Adelman mentioned that a new effort is being planned in Beijing, China, to support an inter-university center which will enable Princeton to pursue partnerships with several Chinese universities, and work closely with Tsinghua University.

Future challenges include developing a partnership construct that can work with universities in Africa where infrastructure and resources are not necessarily robust enough to support ongoing partnerships. The council also is considering the sustainability of programs. Professor Adelman stressed the importance of faculty interest and involvement. The University can provide funds and administratively ease exchanges, but person-to-person connections determine success.

Presidential Travel; Global Partnerships

The President thanked Professor Adelman noting the time and effort necessary to develop and nourish these partnerships. He then gave the Council an overview of his travel during the past few weeks, starting with Appleton, Wisconsin, where he and other members of the University community attended the installation of Mark Burstein, former Executive Vice President at Princeton, as president. President Eisgruber’s travels continued to Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, and Hong Kong where there is a growing and vibrant presence of Princetonians. In addition to meetings with alumni, his time was devoted to furthering global partnerships mentioned by Professor Adelman. He described the University’s efforts to deepen opportunities in China, building on existing University programs and on deep faculty interest in the country. Princeton in Beijing, through the Department of East Asian Studies, is the premier Chinese language program in the U.S. and wishes to expand both the length of its programs and the fields it teaches. To enable this kind of expansion and to strengthen Princeton’s presence in China, the University is creating an inter-university center as described by Professor Adelman. The President underscored the wide areas of faculty interest in Asia from engineering to mathematics to astrophysics and remarked on the impressive impact Princeton Graduate School alumni have had on their countries including in government leadership roles.

In response to a question from a faculty member the President noted that Vice Provost Diana Davies can help faculty determine the viability of proposals for partnerships. He underscored the large number of informal strategic partnerships that exist, some of which would not benefit from a more formal agreement. Responding to the challenge of undergraduates studying abroad, the President described the rise in the numbers taking advantage of international experiences, thanks in part to the Bridge Year Program and more summer courses like Princeton in Beijing. The University is also exploring courses taught abroad by Princeton faculty to Princeton students. Undergraduates are also integrated in different ways in these partnerships, and exchanges of students between Princeton and Tokyo are being developed. The new facility planned for 20 Washington Road will bring together these international initiatives under one roof.

Other Council members suggested ways in which these partnerships can further the University’s motto of “Princeton… in the service of all nations” by using these efforts to help other institutions build their own capacity and strengths.
Report of the Priorities Committee

Provost Lee gave the annual report of the Priorities Committee. He introduced members of the committee in attendance and reviewed the committee’s mission and schedule which calls for formal recommendations of the following year’s operating budget to be presented for approval to the president and to the Board of Trustees each January. To continue to balance the budget, the committee looks at costs, for example, salary pools, and the important revenue stream including tuition, returns on the endowment and Annual Giving levels. He noted that the current exposure to economic instability and uncertainty about the federal budget reduce Princeton’s budget flexibility. The University has also experienced recently higher costs for recruitment and retention of faculty (comprising the “Science Fund”). The Provost discussed the philosophy of endowment spending, guided overall by the intention neither to privilege the future nor to erode the value of the endowment. The Trustees in creating the spending rate policy band have aimed for balance.

There was discussion about the impact on all institutions of higher education of reduction in federal support for research and the federal sequestration. It was noted that the University is forecasting a decline of 2% in sponsored research and the impact is being experienced in other ways, for example through delays in equipment research purchases. The challenge is to find private sources of funds, from foundations or corporations, for example, that can help replace government funding. All of our peer institutions are experiencing the same budget pressures. The President said that the American Association of Universities is discussing steps to be taken to respond to these federal cuts and the impact on discretionary spending. Presidents are talking to members of Congress in particular about the critical support to research given by the federal government; there is no substitute.

There was a question about a recent law suit challenging the University’s not-for-profit status in part because of funds from patents from faculty research discoveries. The President first noted that the total revenue from such sources to the University is relatively small, and because sustainability of such funds is not certain, they are not built into the operating budget. While the University takes the law suit seriously, the arguments misunderstand the mission of a university which is to create new knowledge, to develop new knowledge, and to move it to market.

In response to a question about the impact of budget constraints on faculty recruitment, the President said that because the University is ranked among the very best institutions, Princeton does well in spite of budget cuts.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Halliday
Secretary