Planning for Princeton’s Future

CPUC Town Hall
February 10, 2014

As revised, February 11, 2014
Second semester priorities

- Moving forward the arts neighborhood, international initiatives, the diversity report, and other ongoing projects
- Continuing the listening tour
- Beginning a strategic planning process
What is the purpose of the strategic planning process?

- To identify evolving needs and challenges

- To create a flexible, iterative, and practical framework for allocating University resources and assessing and prioritizing new initiatives

- Different from versions of “strategic planning” that involve the creation of detailed, comprehensive, and non-strategic “wish lists”
What kinds of questions will the strategic planning process address?

- How, if at all, should we modify past characterizations of Princeton’s mission?

- How do Princeton’s mission and characteristics distinguish it from other high-quality research universities and liberal arts colleges?

- In light of Princeton’s mission and characteristics, what opportunities and risks most require our attention?

- What must Princeton do in the next five to ten years to maximize its resources and capacity to pursue its mission?

- Answering these questions will provide a framework for discussion and evaluation of specific proposals as they arise
How will the strategic planning process take place?

- Multiple levels of planning in dialogue with one another

- Trustee-level planning
  - To define priorities and standards against which to test University investments, initiatives, and practices
  - To ensure that the University operates on the basis of a sound and sustainable financial model

- Campus-level committees
  - Some are underway:
    - Committee studying the future of sponsored research (led by Provost Lee and Dean Debnedetti)
    - Campus planning committee (led by Executive Vice President Williams, Vice President McKay, and University Architect McCoy)
  - More will be needed, both during and after the trustee-level process
  - Do as much as possible through established committees and processes

- Periodic public updates through CPUC and other channels
Reviving the Faculty Advisory Committee on Policy (FACP)

- Wanted a confidential faculty committee to serve as a sounding board on policy issues

- Discovered that one exists!

- Active during the Goheen and Bowen administrations, less so in recent years

- Important to have such a committee as we enter a period of planning
Characteristics of the FACP

- From Chapter II, Section D.2.c, of the “Rules and Procedures of the Faculty of Princeton University”:
  
  - The Advisory Committee on Policy consists of the six members of the Faculty elected by the Faculty to represent it on the Executive Committee of the Council of the Princeton University Community. . . .
  
  - The Advisory Committee on Policy meets with the President at her or his request, at the request of the Faculty, or on its own motion, to afford advisory consultation on matters of University-wide policy of concern to the Faculty and not primarily within the jurisdiction of other established committees.

- This semester’s members: Sigrid M. Adriaenssens, Civil and Environmental Engineering; Joshua Guild, History and African American Studies (substituting for David Wilcove, WWS and EEB, who is on leave); Hendrik Hartog, History; Peter Meyers, Physics; Francois Morel, Geosciences; and Tamsen Wolff, English.
Timeline for the trustees’ governance-level process

- Initial discussions in January

- Will continue throughout the 2014-15 academic year

- The resulting plan will be revisited and updated periodically
How might we answer the planning questions?

- The next few slides describe my preliminary views

- Revisable hypotheses—more questions than answers

- They will and indeed *should* change: the goal of the planning process is to improve on the starting point
Mission-defining values and commitments

- A world-class research university with a distinctive emphasis on
  - undergraduate liberal arts education, and
  - doctoral education

- Small, very high quality master’s degree programs limited to public and international affairs, architecture, finance, and engineering

- A warm, inclusive, and engaged community

- Affordable to all admitted students

- “In the nation’s service and in the service of all nations”
Other characteristics

- Endowment-driven budget (one of the best-resourced universities in the world)
- Expensive (though also affordable)
- Elite, with a history of exclusivity
- Beautiful, well-maintained, park-like and walkable suburban campus
- Small for a research university
- Dependent on government revenue for sponsored research
- No foreign campuses, few professional schools, no classified research
Significant trends

- Growing inequality in American society (and the world)
- Internationalization, including in markets for education and research
- Online technology changing the educational sector
- Partisanship and budget pressure in Washington
- Possibility of long-term economic stagnation
- Intense market demand for high-quality undergraduate education
- Political skepticism about the value of liberal arts education and basic research
- Changing patterns of philanthropy
Consequences of growing inequality

- Princeton’s commitment to be “an engine of social mobility” is
  - Increasingly important to society
  - Increasingly questioned (critics say we are part of the problem, not part of the solution)

- A growing gap separates the best-resourced universities from others
  - Other colleges and universities face intense financial pressures
  - Policy-makers are tempted to “level down”

- Inequality affects the pressures that students face and the goals they set
  - Students cope with intense competition for spaces at elite institutions
  - Some career paths offer disproportionate returns in an uncertain economy

- Inequality contributes to Washington’s governance crisis
Making a difference in the world

- We must justify everything we do on the basis of its contribution to the common good

- We contribute to the common good principally through
  - Rigorous scholarship focused on fundamental questions about nature, technology, and the human condition
  - Outstanding education for exceptionally talented undergraduates and graduate students
  - Training for other emerging scholars, including postdocs and visiting fellows

- Excellence is essential to what we do, but excellence is not sufficient to achieve our mission
Renewing Wilson’s ideals

- Emphasize and enhance our commitment to be “in the nation’s service, and in the service of all nations”

- Recognize that rigorous, high-quality education and research are important not only for their own sake but as the core of Princeton’s public service mission

- Ensure that a Princeton education prepares students to lead meaningful lives connected to a public purpose

- Plan initiatives focused on leadership, citizenship, and service
Four initiatives “in the service of all nations”

1. Sustaining and enhancing excellence that makes a difference in the world

2. Making strategic academic investments

3. Enabling more students to contribute to the world in more ways

4. Making service central to the Princeton experience
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 policy-makers?

- 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?

- How should Princeton update its curriculum and pedagogy in light of changing needs, opportunities, and technologies?
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?

- Can Princeton do more to meet the demand for knowledge about society, culture, politics, and economics in diverse regions of the world?

- How can Princeton accommodate, capitalize upon, and contribute to the momentous developments in computer science and machine learning?
  - Fascinating and important in their own right
  - Revolutionizing fields throughout the University, from linguistics to the life sciences

- Can Princeton help to design solutions for the crisis in American public education?
Enabling more students to contribute to the world in more ways

- When should we expand the undergraduate student body again?
  - The biggest problem in our sector of undergraduate education is scarcity
  - How do we preserve Princeton’s distinctive culture and sense of community?
  - How do we ensure that we have needed capacity in residence halls, academic departments, and student services?

- How can we reach more students from low-income families?
  - How can we expand existing outreach programs?
  - Should we add new initiatives—for example, should we create a transfer program that could attract military veterans and community college students?
  - What more can we do to ensure that students from all backgrounds will thrive at Princeton?

- 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?
  - Can we make existing service initiatives better and more visible?
  - What new initiatives should we add?
  - How can we ensure that Princeton alumni connect their liberal arts education to meaningful work and purposeful careers throughout their lives?

- How can Princeton itself take a global leadership role in higher education?

  *For example...*
  - Through advocacy for liberal arts education and basic research
  - Through increased use of our ability to convene public events
  - Through building educational capacity internationally
  - Through on-campus commitments to diversity and sustainability
Answering these questions will require hard choices

- We cannot count on the kind of economic growth that benefited Princeton in decades past.

- Princeton can accomplish great things, but we must choose goals wisely.

- Some worthy projects will have to be deferred, and we will have to be conscious of opportunity costs.
Questions?