Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community held December 12, 2011 in 101 Friend Center. Present were Council members Ms. Alberts, Alivisatos, Ms. Alversa, Ms. Bell Blackburn, Ms. Berthier, Ms. Dagci, Ms. Doyle, Mr. Durkee, Ms. Ettman, Mr. Fittizzi, Professor Gitai, Professor Harman, Mr. Henneberg, Mr. Immordino, Mr. Kao, Mr. Keller, Ms. Kim, Mr. Lindsay, Mr. McDonough, Ms. Mellby, Professor Morel, Dr. Morel Kraepied, Mr. Mulcahy, Prof. Oppenheimer, Ms. Poladian, Mr. Pretko, Ms. Ridgeway, Professor Rosen, Mr. Smith, President Tilghman (chair), Mr. Tully, Mr. Yaroshefsky; Ms. Halliday was secretary.

The President called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. She asked for and received approval of the minutes of the November 14 Council meeting which had been distributed in advance.

There were no questions.

Update on Renovations of Firestone Library

University Librarian Karin Trainer introduced a discussion about the “who, what, and why” of the renovations of Firestone Library. The answer to “why” is partly the age of the building, constructed in the late 1940s and the need to make it more accessible, a better fit for the technology of today, more sustainable, and better able to meet the need of students and faculty for the future.

The “who” of the renovation is University architect Ron McCoy along with two teams of outside architects, Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott, a firm specializing in libraries and known for completing renovations while libraries are occupied; and Frederick Fisher and Partners, a firm that designed Sherrerd Hall and who will focus on signature spaces requiring special attention.

Mr. McCoy noted that the “what” of the renovations, to be achieved over a ten-year period in a series of phases, ranges from new or renovated infrastructure systems to study spaces, from transformation of old spaces and creation of new spaces, including rearranging the entrance area and exhibition spaces, recapturing a third-floor reading lounge, and creating reading or scholar carrels. The furniture will be in keeping with the design of the building which has a Gothic-style exterior and a more modern, Art Deco, interior. The work includes necessary upgrades to the infrastructure including adding sprinkler systems in areas not yet covered. The proposed renovations were illustrated by slides showing architectural renderings.

The University Librarian described efforts to keep patrons informed about the changes. A new information desk on C-Floor provides a librarian-on-call to help find books that have been moved. Work has already begun on infrastructure improvements; the last phase contemplates updating the 1988 addition which by that time will be in need of refurbishment.

During the discussion that followed Ms. Trainer confirmed that the study carrels which in the past have been assigned to seniors will be replaced by study areas with nearby lockers assigned to students beginning early this spring. The change was prompted by a survey of the carrels conducted during the February to May period last year to observe how often the carrels were used
by students and what they contained. She explained the complex staging of work, especially when support facilities, like rest rooms, need to be closed for renovation. Thought is being given to relatively small changes that can have a larger impact like orienting book shelves in the same way, or the height of book shelves; and moving extended-hour study spaces used during reading period from the basement to the Trustee Reading Room. The architects are trying to create a coherent whole by using existing design details. Various types of furniture will be made available on a trial basis to determine what works best. She invited members of the community to keep updated about progress on the renovations through the library’s website:
http://libblogs.princeton.edu/renovations/.

COMBO III Undergraduate Student Survey

USG president Michael Yaroshefsky ’12 introduced a report on results of a survey that recently had been conducted by the USG to gain information about the ways in which a student’s background can influence his or her Princeton experience and about barriers to a student’s achievement or well-being. COMBO III is the latest in a series of surveys conducted about undergraduate life approximately every two years. It was distributed during the summer and is the largest and most comprehensive to date. The USG hopes to enter into a dialogue with the University community about the results; suggest policies that would remove obstacles; and measure the success of these efforts. He introduced the team of students responsible for the survey. Katlin Poladian ’12 described how the survey was designed, using models such as national surveys and past COMBO surveys. Members of the classes of 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 were asked to complete the survey in a six-week timeframe; 36% responded. Merick Mulcahy ’13 noted that the analysis of replies included attention to whether the group was diverse and representative of the student body. Bruce Easop ’13 underscored the invitation to University offices to study the data for ways to better serve students. An outline of “Statistically Significant Results” was handed out and is attached here as Appendix A. The students reviewed the results with the Council. The survey suggests statistically significant differences in how students experience Princeton and take advantage of opportunities depending on geographic background, family level of education, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or participation in athletics.

Members of the Council expressed interest in learning more about the findings for their particular academic department, and the students said that the powerpoint which included statistical information would be posted to the USG website http://usg.princeton.edu/. Others asked if these results suggest that Princeton is an “outlier,” different from other institutions. The results of surveys conducted by other organizations or institutions, some of which were used to compile COMBO III, suggest that Princeton is not significantly different from peers. In terms of how this iteration of the COMBO survey compares to the past, the students noted that the focus of earlier surveys had been somewhat different – on eating options and socio-economic backgrounds. They had created this survey intentionally as a new starting point for future dialogue. [A recent article in the Princeton Alumni Weekly about survey findings might also be of interest: http://paw.princeton.edu/issues/2012/02/08/pages/8364/index.xml.]

The President thanked the students for providing data that the University can learn from.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Ann Halliday
Secretary
ACADEMICS

- Students from rural backgrounds are more likely (12% compared to 6% overall) to choose majors based upon future financial prospects and more likely to feel unprepared by their high school for coursework at Princeton (51%, vs. 24%)
- The odds of reporting comfort at office hours for Hispanic students are 63.7% as great as for white students
- The odds of black students reporting workload management as a source of stress are 64.8% higher than for white students
- A higher proportion of athletes tend to feel comfortable or very comfortable with University resources
  - Writing Center: 43.17% vs. 36.35% responding comfortable
  - McGraw Center: 39.13% vs. 30.75% responding comfortable
  - Peer Tutoring: 30.75% vs. 20.83% responding comfortable and 10.25% vs. 6.61% responding very comfortable
- A higher proportion of athletes were inclined to pursue business degrees than non-athletes. In fact, a significantly smaller number indicated a desire to pursue PhD or Master’s degree in non-business related fields
  - MBA: 23.29% vs. 13.94%
  - Master’s: 29.5% vs. 42.96%
  - PhD: 20.19% vs. 36.21%
- Women were significantly less likely to feel more than average academically prepared from high school
- Men were less comfortable accessing campus resources like the Writing Center, McGraw Center, peer tutoring, and Career Services.
- Religious students were more likely to feel less comfortable with academic and career resources. More than non-religious students they indicated that they “tried to avoid”:
  - Office hour
  - Writing center
  - McGraw center
  - Peer tutoring
  - Academic advisor
  - Residential College or Dean
- Students with parents receiving only a high school diploma were 91% more likely to feel that their high school prepared them less than the average Princeton students for Princeton academics
In most leadership positions, there was no statistically significant difference in participation rates between males and females.

- In student government, there was no statistically significant difference in proportion of females and males involved in leadership positions.
- However, women were more likely than men to hold leadership positions in organizations involving dance, volunteer service, literary publications, and civic engagement.

Students from rural backgrounds are less likely to participate in or hold leadership positions in ethnic/cultural organizations than the general population (46% vs. 33%).

Students from urban backgrounds are more likely to participate in or hold leadership positions in dance groups and/or ethnic/cultural groups.

- Students from urban backgrounds were more likely to not join other extracurriculars because they were not sensitive to diversity (5% vs. 3%), not effective (9% vs. 6%), and/or because they have a paying job (13% vs. 9%).

Black students were 2.7 times more likely than whites to report not joining other extracurriculars because of a lack of sensitivity to diversity.

Non-straight identified students are less likely to join a club because it appears to have a lack of sensitivity to diversity, and/or because it is ineffective.

They are also less likely to be confident in leadership ability and are more uncomfortable joining groups without a friend.

They are more likely to join politically active groups on campus. Less likely to participate in Greek life, IM sports, or Varsity Athletics.

A much higher proportion of athletes did not participate in extracurricular activities outside of athletics as compared to non-athletes.

Conversely, varsity athletes are more likely to hold leadership positions in eating clubs or fraternities/sororities.

Social Life

- Race: Black students were 2 times less likely than white students to use their RCAs. Two times more likely to mark “Not Applicable” on their comfort accessing their Residential College Advisor (RCA).
- For black students, the odds of reporting that Princeton friendships are more meaningful than previous ones are 57.1% that of white students.
- Non-straight identified students feel less comfortable talking to RCAs as well.
- Rural students are more likely to assert that it was difficult to meet people like them at Princeton, but also find meaningful opportunities to meet people at co-ops 5 times more than those from the suburbs.
- Athletes reported difficulties with relationships and friends as a significant source of stress less frequently than non-athletes and reported feeling social anxiety much less frequently than non-athletes.
  - Difficulties with Relationships: Very Stressful 6.21% vs. 12.21%.
  - Difficulties with Friends: Not a source of Stress 46.27% vs. 39.08%; Very Stressful 2.17% vs. 5.46%.
  - Times per Week Feeling Social Anxiety: Zero 26.71% vs. 15.37%; Three 11.49% vs. 18.25%.
- Females were significantly more likely to bicker a club and be rejected than males.
• Non-straight identified students reported lack self-confidence in social abilities
  o Non-straight identified students consider opportunities to meet people in diversity centers to be much more meaningful than the average Princeton student
  o Non-straight identified students are more likely not to be in eating clubs at all, and then not evenly distributed throughout eating clubs

**Mental Well-Being**

• Students from urban backgrounds were more likely to feel they were in the top 10% of social self-confidence at Princeton (13% vs. 10%), but they were more likely to often feel out of place at Princeton in the past year (13% vs. 10%)
• The odds of reporting feeling depressed for black students are 60.6% higher than for white students
  o For black students, the odds of reporting higher numbers of people to talk to are 71.9% that of white students
• The odds of black students rating themselves higher than average on emotional health are 70% that of white students
• Females were significantly more likely to feel depressed, overwhelmed, out of place or experience new mental health issues since coming to Princeton within the past year than males.
  o Females’ self confidence attributes in all categories (intellectual [31% vs. 57%], social [34% vs. 41.6%], leadership [45% vs. 58%], and emotional confidence [47% VS. 59%]) were statistically significantly lower than males in these categories, most notably in the category of intellectual confidence
• Athletes rate their emotional health, social self-confidence, and leadership ability in the highest 10% or above average more often than non-athletes
• A smaller proportion of athletes said they felt depressed or overwhelmed and reported feeling out of place, not fitting in, or experiencing new mental health challenges significantly less than non-athletes
  o Felt Depressed: Sometimes (26.09% vs. 37.79%); Very Rarely (23.91% vs. 15.95%); Never (16.77% vs. 10.49%)
  o Felt Overwhelmed: Often (26.71% vs. 34.05%); Never (4.04% vs. 1.01%)
• Non-straight identified students are more likely to experience new mental health challenges at Princeton
  o Many have felt depressed and feel constantly out of place at Princeton
  o Report low emotional health on campus, and tend to feel anxious more times a week than the average student
  o Many feel that personal difficulties with family are a huge source of stress
  o More likely to take a year off from school
  o Do not feel comfortable in dorms, and especially not in Dillon Gym

**POST-PRINCETON PLANS**

• A higher percentage of athletes tend to feel comfortable with Career services advising
  o Career Services: 47.52% vs. 40.37% responding comfortable
  o Pre-Professional Advising: 33.54% vs. 23.42%
Athletes seem to be more comfortable using networks when pursuing internship/job opportunities, reporting the influence of affiliations with organizations as being influential in making them comfortable in the job search more often than non-athletes
  - Eating Club Affiliation
  - Athletic Affiliation
  - Greek Affiliation
  - Alumni Affiliation
  - Student Group Affiliation

Females were more likely to participate in unpaid internships but more likely to have on-campus work so it is unlikely that this is due to financial security.

Women were significantly more likely to pursue professional schools like law and business schools, but not graduate school.

A higher proportion of religious students marked “organizational affiliation,” “athletic affiliation,” “alumni affiliation,” and “family connections” as being very influential in their comfort pursuing internships and employment opportunities.

Students with parents having only a high school diploma were 177% more likely to want to travel after graduation than the average student. They were less likely to want to go to graduate school and professional school than the average student.

Non-straight identified students are less likely to feel comfortable using Career Services as a resource.