Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community held May 6, 2013 in 010 East Pyne. Present were Council members Ms. Alivisatos, Ms. Bui, Mr. Burd, Ms. Cherrey, Ms. Clifton, Mr. Cook, Prof. Davis, Mr. Diskin, Ms. Doyle, Ms. Durden, Mr. Durkee, Provost Eisgruber, Prof. Harman, Dr. Hourihane, Mr. Jackson, Ms. Kim, Mr. Kugelmass, Mr. Maisel, Ms. Mancenon, Dr. Matthies, Mr. McDonough, Prof. Morel, Dr. Neglia, Mr. Okuda-Lim, Mr. Riley, Prof. Rivett, Mr. Robertson, Ms. Scott, President Tilghman (chair), Ms. Wright, Prof. Wysocki, Dr. Yao, and Mr. Zhu; Ms. Halliday was secretary.

After the roll call and approval of minutes of the March 11, 2013 meeting, the President called for questions. Hearing none, she introduced Provost Eisgruber who had been elected Princeton’s next president in April. The Council welcomed him with applause. The provost described a “listening tour” he was conducting on and off campus to hear from members of the University community. High on his immediate agenda were searches for a new provost and executive vice president; fostering the Lewis Center arts initiatives; strengthening diversity on campus; and considering the future of research and liberal arts colleges today. He noted the importance of partnering with sister institutions especially at a time when the federal government was questioning the value of liberal arts. In answer to a question he described the qualities that are important in a provost including the ability to lead and to be a partner for the president, the ability to understand and address the needs of a wide range of constituencies, and to set priorities, sometimes among competing “goods.”

Resources Committee Amendment to the Charter

The President then asked for a vote on a proposal to amend the CPUC Charter. This amendment had been introduced at the March meeting by the Chair of the CPUC Resources Committee, Professor Deborah Prentice. At the President’s request, Professor Prentice explained that the rationale for the requested amendment was to promote transparency and to facilitate communication between the committee and PRINCO. The proposed amendment follows with added text underscored:

5.5.2 The Committee on Resources shall consist of the Financial Vice President; three members of the Faculty; two undergraduate students; one graduate student; and one member from one of the other groups represented on the Council. A member of the Princeton University Investment Company [PRINCO] shall be a non-voting member of the committee.

The Council voted approval.

Professor Prentice then summarized the work of the Resources Committee in the previous year. The committee had considered a petition from a group of faculty to prohibit the University investing in enterprises that concerned weapons. As stipulated by the guidelines followed by the committee, to determine sustained interest in the concerns raised by the petition, the committee would continue its consideration of the ban on investment in weapons in the next academic year. She noted that at present the University has no such investment holdings. Professor Prentice also
described steps the committee will take to encourage transparency including a review of the guidelines that help the committee decide when to bring a concern to the Council; holding town hall meetings to promote dialogue with the campus community and to educate the campus community about its work.

Student Mental Health

The President introduced John Kolligian, Executive Director of University Health Services, to lead a discussion about student mental health. He introduced the topic by noting the challenges students encounter while at Princeton and the resources that UHS offers to make a positive difference in their lives. He described improved communication with students. For instance, UHS staff makes “house calls” to the residential colleges. He also noted the introduction of innovative intervention techniques such as bystander intervention workshops and use of mindfulness meditation.

Dr. Kolligian introduced a panel of members of the University community who have been working with UHS to promote better mental health including Bruce Easop ’13, the former USG President; Friederike Funk, GSG president; David Campbell, Interim CPS director, and Michael Olin, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students who is the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students’ link to UHS. During the discussion with panel members suggestions were made about better communication especially with faculty concerning resources available to them to help students. Information about these resources should be readily available – perhaps using a Web site – and easy to understand. Students noted that stress was not unique to Princeton; students at other institutions were experiencing similar levels of stress. Drawing on a recent COMBO survey of undergraduates, Mr. Easop suggested that the University should review the root causes of stress among the student body, and consider whether the structure of the curriculum contributes needlessly to stress, including course loads. They urged UHS to talk to students about the care they receive and ask them how to improve care. Given the desire for confidentiality, even the way in which waiting rooms in UHS are physically set up could make a difference in a student’s experience.

The President thanked Dr. Kolligian and the panel participants. Noting that this was the last meeting of the Council, she thanked Council members for their service. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Halliday
Secretary