

Council of the Princeton University Community Minutes, October 1, 2007

Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community held Monday, October 1, 2007, in Betts Auditorium, School of Architecture. Present were council members Mr. Ayalon, Ms. Bakanic, Mr. Biederman, Mr. Burstein, Professor Cook, Ms. Dickerson, Professor Draine, Mr. Dwoskin, Provost Eisgruber, Mr. Field, Professor Fiske, Ms. Harris, Ms. Heisler, Mr. Hernandez, Ms. Hummer, Ms. Hutzly, Ms. Langberg, Ms. Lin, Professor Lyon, Dean Malkiel, Mr. McCrudden, Mr. McDonough, Ms. McGinty, Mr. No, Ms. Rosen, Mr. Said, Ms. Saliccioli, Ms. Saltz, President Tilghman (chair), Dr. Varrin, Ms. Wang, Mr. Weinstein, Professor Wuthnow; Ms. Halliday served as secretary.

Opening of the Year Business

President Tilghman welcomed especially new members of the council to the first meeting of the year.

Approval of "Order of Business" and Committee Assignments

On behalf of the Executive Committee the President brought to the Council the yearly Order of Business and committee assignments made to date, both of which motions the Council approved (these are attached as Appendix A and B respectively).

There were no questions.

Introduction of the Dean of Religious Life and of the Chapel

The President introduced Alison Boden, the new Dean of Religious Life and of the Chapel who had assumed office over the summer. She comes to Princeton from the University of Chicago and has had long experience in higher education.

Dean Boden noted that she had spent the past few weeks trying to get her bearings at Princeton and better understand the ways in which she can best help enhance life for all on campus. She hoped to engage all in the community, and to find ways to reach common values without reaching a lowest common denominator. In response to questions, the dean said that the greatest challenge she faces is to make the most of Princeton's incredible resources. With respect to how members of the community can help her, the Dean said "talk to me." Conversations would most help her understand the needs of the community.

Princeton's Capital Campaign

The President introduced Director of Development Michele Minter, confirming the truth of the "rumor" that the University is about to launch a major fund-raising campaign. Ms. Minter described the reasons why institutions and Princeton in particular have campaigns and the goals for this particular campaign. (A copy of her Power Point presentation is attached as Appendix C.) The objective is to strengthen alumni relationships as much as to raise new funds. She gave a broad snapshot of the table of needs which includes engineering, the arts, neuroscience, international programs, African-American Studies, financial aid, residential life and athletics. In the next 5 years the goal is to raise \$1.75 billion.

During the discussion that followed Ms. Minter described the art of matching the needs of the University with donor interest. While the University gives careful consideration to all offers of gifts, and some in fact are turned down, unexpected gifts, designated for purposes not named in the table of needs, can provide important impetus to University goals. Alumni contribute generously to Annual Giving whose funds are available for unrestricted use, but many of the gifts in a campaign are restricted and the University works hard to ensure that it can meet the expectations of donors. The President gave further information about facilities that are included as fund-raising goals such as an arts center near McCarter Theater, new Butler College dorms, wet laboratory space for the Engineering School, a new home near neuroscience for psychology. Asked about renovations to the recreational sports facility, Dillon Gym, the President reported that resources to renovate the facility and to create an endowment to support staff are part of the University's ten-year capital plan.

“Second Life”

Janet Temos, Director of Educational Technologies Center, Academic Services in the Office of Information Technology, was then invited to demonstrate “Second Life.” Ms. Temos first described a variety of efforts initiated or supported by OIT to promote and facilitate use of computer technology to enhance teaching and learning. One of the responsibilities of OIT is to be aware of innovations and to test them for broader University use. One example of current efforts is “Second Life,” an online site that incorporates elements of several universities in three-dimensional characterizations. The Website's address is <http://etc.princeton.edu/sl/> (and the best way to understand Second Life is to visit the Website). It is self-described as an “online space for creativity, collaboration, commerce, and entertainment.”

Ms. Temos and her colleagues have taken an active role in establishing a presence for Princeton in “Second Life.” She discussed its potential uses and benefits. It provides Princeton with another way to advertise to the world – there are predictions that “Second Life” and applications like it will become highly popular internationally especially among age groups of students we would like to attract. “Second Life” can provide a venue for events such as concerts in Alexander Hall with artists performing live from across the globe. Its potential to portray and explore three-dimensional objects contributes to teaching and learning in the arts especially – she gave the example of being able to tour the cathedral in Cologne, Germany.

A lively discussion followed. A word of caution was raised concerning the portrayal of the University on the site. If it is true that viewers and participants will tend to equate Princeton in “Second Life” to the real University, then it is important to seek input from those offices in the University that are responsible for communicating the University to the outside world, such as Communications. The genuine value of “Second Life” was questioned, especially given the tendency for online applications like it to become true “sinkholes” of time.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Halliday
Secretary