

Council of the Princeton University Community Minutes, December 10, 2007

Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community held Monday, December 10, 2007, in Betts Auditorium, School of Architecture. Present were council members Professor Armstrong, Mr. Ayalon, Ms. Bakanic, Mr. Biederman, Mr. Burstein, Professor Cook, Ms. Dickerson, Mr. Dwoskin, Provost Eisgruber, Mr. Field, Professor Fiske, Professor Hasty, Ms. Heisler, Ms. Hummer, Mr. Joshi, Ms. Lang, Ms. Langberg, Dean Malkiel, Mr. McCrudden, Mr. McDonough, Mr. No, Professor Nunokawa, Ms. Rosen, Mr. Said, Ms. Salciccioli, Ms. Saltz, Mr. Sanford, President Tilghman (chair), Dr. Varrin, Ms. Wang, Mr. Weinstein, Professor Wuthnow; Ms. Halliday served as secretary.

Opening Business

President Tilghman requested and received approval of minutes of the November 12 meeting as circulated in advance of the meeting.

The President read a question a member of the Council had emailed prior to the meeting: “Why did you accept an invitation from Chabad to attend a Chanukah Shabbat dinner last Friday? Does accepting such an invitation signify a forthcoming change of university policy toward Chabad, which was denied a chaplaincy position by the university only last year?” The President responded that she makes an effort to accept all campus invitations especially when extended by students, and that her acceptance of the dinner invitation had no implication regarding University policy toward Chabad. There were no further questions.

Report of the Priorities Committee

The Provost reported for one of the Council’s standing committees, the Priorities Committee, which he chairs and which is charged with making recommendations to the President for transmittal to the Trustees regarding the operating budget. The committee which has a rigorous schedule represents a cross section of the University community and considers as part of its yearly agenda tuition and fee rates and salary increase pools. Discussion focused on the flexibility that the committee has from year to year to fund requests from the community. The Provost noted that heads of major units review requests before they are transmitted to the committee so the ones that reach the committee are thought to be of highest priority. The funds available are limited, however, each year, and the committee must make sometimes difficult choices. The recent Trustee changes in the endowment income spending rule have helped departments meet some needs that otherwise would have been requests to the Priorities Committee. He noted that some needs are ongoing and fundamental to the University’s ability to carry out its mission. Energy costs continue to increase, and thanks to steps taken by the Board regarding endowment income spending, the University is able to fund these and similar infrastructure needs while building up reserves for extraordinary costs that occur from time to time. He noted that the endowment returns have been “exceptional,” which helps account for the University budget’s “vigorous good health.” However, he also drew attention to worrying trends that impact the budget including the lower than anticipated level of government and other research funding. The committee will complete its work and make final recommendations to the

president in January. [Since the meeting, the Priorities Committee made its recommendations to the Trustees which the Board accepted at its January meeting. A copy of the committee's report to the Board can be found at this link: <http://www.princeton.edu/~provost/Pricomm.htm>.]

Report of the Manager of the Office of Sustainability

Shana Weber, Manager of the Office of Sustainability, had been invited to the Council meeting to provide information about her office's mission. She described her office's goals of promoting sustainability efforts on campus and in University departments, reducing Princeton's carbon "footprint" and conserving resources while educating especially students about the importance of conservation and how to achieve sustainability so that when they leave Princeton, sustainability will be a part of their life choices.

She emphasized the important role students play in achieving the goals of sustainability. They are ambassadors to the rest of the campus community, and they take an active part in creating and participating in pilot projects. Ms. Weber introduced a panel of students who have been involved in recent initiatives, and each reported briefly on his or her projects.

- ❖ Connor Cobean '08 described efforts to attract and hold the attention of the University community with respect to energy consumption and conservation by focusing on lifestyle choices that each person makes. Meters to monitor energy use in dormitory rooms have been used successfully at other institutions, and he described a pilot program on campus that allows students easy and immediate access to meter measurements of energy that they directly control. He underscored the goal of encouraging Princeton students to integrate sustainability into their lifestyle.
- ❖ Wes Lu '10 talked about the ecology representatives program focused on promoting recycling of everything from furniture to bottles. Promotional programs such as "recycle mania" were being used to heighten awareness of the importance of recycling. At Princeton, they hoped to team up with residential college advisers to change habits of students and to provide an effective infrastructure to facilitate achieving recycling goals.
- ❖ Katy Andersen '08 and Ruthie Schwab '09 from the Farm to Fork Program discussed initiatives supported by the University to promote connections with local food providers. Such efforts strengthen local communities, reduce energy transportation use, and promote healthy eating. A local farmers' market held in the plaza by Firestone Library this fall featuring local farms and purveyors was a success. Students successfully created a produce garden by Forbes College that has helped to feed students this fall. That effort will be expanded this year, with help from students in the School of Architecture who have helped to design the new garden. Using food is an essential reminder of sustainability, and the group is planning lectures on healthy eating and culinary workshops.

During the discussion that followed, members of the council commented on particular areas of sustainability that they have noticed. A question about whether the University recycles plastic bottles and cans (it does) suggested that the availability of recycling containers is not widespread enough or evident enough to be used effectively. Others mentioned lighting as an area of concern. Ms. Weber described advances in lighting technology, for instance using low-

energy LEDs, and she noted that a pilot program using these forms of lighting is currently in use in a parking garage. Members of the council suggested that better monitoring of facilities was needed, using the example of the stadium where lights seem to be on when the facility is not in use. Students also asked about efforts of another campus group, SURGE, which was trying to promote institutional programs and personal efforts, for example, turning off electricity in dormitory rooms over break. (A member of that group offered to answer questions after the meeting.)

Ms. Weber also addressed questions about water conservation efforts. In part these focus on substitutions for potable water and use of sustainable technology in new facilities. For example, rain water will be used in the new chemistry building to flush toilets. The University is also using new technologies like low flow showerheads to limit water waste. Storm water management is a growing area of attention. The chemistry building will have a green roof to help absorb rain water; some fields elsewhere have water retention systems built beneath them that are used for irrigation purposes, and non-potable water is used to support landscaping. More information is available at the office's website: <http://www.princeton.edu/sustainability/>.

The President thanked Ms. Weber and the students for their informative presentation. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Halliday
Secretary