Annual Report of the Steering Committee of University Council, 1996-97

This is the nineteenth annual report of the Steering Committee of University Council, prepared in accordance with a requirement in the Council Bylaws that the Steering Committee shall publish an annual report to the University community that reviews the previous year’s Council deliberations and highlights “both significant discussions and formal votes taken on matters of substance.”

September Meeting
In light of recent incidents and anxiety about safety on campus, Council discussed safety and security issues and additional security measures being planned and implemented including a new University Police headquarters in the 40th Street vicinity.

Council re-examined the Communications Committee’s draft policy on student privacy in University relations. After extensive discussion the moderator moved to adopt the Draft Policy on Electronic Information. He further suggested moving towards adoption of the policy of student privacy in University residences, and that the draft policy not be diluted by merging with any other policy. All three motions were affirmed by Council and the motions carried.

Council heard reports from the Bookstore Committee and the Safety and Security Committee.

The executive vice president reported on the administrative restructuring process.

The moderator commented that the agenda for the year had not been discussed and asked Council members to communicate to Steering which issues should be raised.

October Meeting
The president reported on Penn’s multi-point plan to improve security on campus, and said she and others in the administration had met with the Mayor of Philadelphia on the subject. Plans include increased PennBus and Escort Service, better lighting, and increased 18th district police numbers.

The provost gave an overview of the 21st Century Project.

Council heard the annual report of the Research Committee.

Council discussed the draft University Council Committee charges for 1996-97, with suggestions noted for the Community Relations, Facilities, International Programs, Personnel Benefits, Pluralism, Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics, Research, and Student Affairs Committees.

Council discussed the draft outline of the 1996-97 University Council agenda and additional suggestions were made.

November Meeting
The president presented her annual report on the State of the University. She reported extensively on the strategic goals of the campus master plan and the Agenda for Excellence, detailing future plans and progress. The president provided detailed information about development of the campus, including expansion to the east and south including acquisition of the Civic Center property, and enhancement to the north and west including security measures and retail stores. Student housing concerns are a significant factor in the master plan.

Council discussed the report of the Safety and Security Committee on semi-automatic weapons and commended the committee chair for his efforts.

December Meeting
The provost presented his extended annual report on the State of the University; he detailed three areas of the Agenda for Excellence: globalization, research, and graduate education.

The format of this meeting was an Open Forum. Questions raised included University real estate decisions and property allocations; outsourcing of services; and community involvement.

The executive vice president responded that he will look into the concerns about outsourcing and report back to Council.

A Council member suggested that the Penn campus be declared a “Drug Free Zone”, and stated that the Alcohol and Drug Task Force is examining this issue. General discussion about alcohol and drugs on campus followed.

January Meeting
The president announced the opening of the new Penn Police and Special Services Unit at 40th and Walnut Streets, part of the revitalization project for the 40th Street area.

Several Council representatives reported that their constituencies’ primary focus this month has been concern with and discussion of the Personnel Benefits changes.

The provost announced that the 21st Century Project established an Undergraduate Advisory Board of fifteen students nominated by their peers. The Admissions Data Work Group report will begin circulation in late January, 1997.

Council heard a detailed presentation on the NCAA review. Council engaged in discussion about the report, and the president summarized that there are changes Penn can make, and that the process has been beneficial.

Council heard reports from the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid, the Bookstore Committee, the Facilities Committee, the Research Committee, and the Safety and Security Committee.

February Meeting
The Personnel Benefits Committee chair presented a “preliminary” report.

The Communications Committee chair presented the proposed Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources. Council engaged in discussion on aspects of the policy, including clarification of the role of the information security officer and other security issues relating to electronic resources. The policy was approved by Council.

The associate provost reported on the proposed Benefits Redesign Report, which was printed in Almanac on February 11, 1997. She outlined the major recommendations. There were numerous questions and comments. Discussion will continue at the March Council meeting.

Council heard the reports of the Community Relations Committee and International Programs Committee, and there was continued discussion about safety and security on campus.

March Meeting
The Steering chair stated that the Committee on Committees and the constituencies are working on filling member slots for next year’s Council committees.

(continued next page)
The chair of the Personnel Benefits Committee reported that after much deliberation the committee had voted on a series of proposals related to the Benefits Redesign Report. He detailed them, and emphasized that the committee felt it had not had sufficient time to thoroughly review and discuss the report.

Council engaged in extensive discussion about many aspects of the Benefits Redesign Report including comprehensive insurance, mental health components of the plans, lifetime caps, graduate tuition benefits, and employee contributions/increase in premiums. Some made statements to Council expressing strong concern that the plan is unfair to employees.

Council heard the report of the Committee for Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics.

Council discussed the proposed Bylaws change to add a seat on Council for an elected representative of the United Minorities Council (UMC); the Committees on Pluralism and Student Affairs had unanimously recommended the seat. The moderator reminded Council that the vote would be held at the next Council meeting, April 30, if a quorum was present and encouraged attendance.

April Meeting
The president announced that following the NCAA review, Penn is in substantial compliance with NCAA rules.

The Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources will go into effect on July 1, 1997.

The Steering chair reported that Steering agreed to recommend abolishing the Student Fulbright Awards Committee as a Council committee replacing it with a provostial committee; this will require a Bylaws revision. He recommended that in view of the concern regarding last year’s A-3 elections, next year’s first Steering meeting should address a resolution requiring Council constituent organizations to supply, at the beginning of each year, a clear statement of its current election procedures and a description of its most recent elections and the results. The Steering chair appointed an ad hoc committee to assist in the structuring of the upcoming A-3 elections to ensure a fair and democratic process.

Council received a point of order paper and heard a statement from a staff member concerning the legitimacy of the current A-3 Assembly representation and whether it should be recognized; discussion ensued.

Since a quorum was not present, Council could not vote on the proposed Bylaws revision to add a United Minorities seat on Council. Steering was asked to address the question of a mail ballot in the context both of needing a quorum to change the Bylaws, and the vote on the specific proposed Bylaws change.

The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly and Career Planning and Placement Services presented data on employment issues facing doctoral students and “Ten Years After” data; discussion followed.

Council heard the report of the Committee on Student Affairs and discussed suggestions for increasing student awareness of problem drinking.

New Council members took their seats and in accordance with Council Bylaws. Council held a preliminary discussion of possible 1997-98 Council focus issues.

— Submitted by Constance C. Goodman, Secretary of University Council

Summary of 1996-97 University Council Resolutions and Recommendations and Administrative Actions Taken on Them

I. Resolutions from the 1996-97 Academic Year

1. Council moved to adopt the Committee on Communications’ Draft Policy on Electronic Information, to “move toward” adoption of the Policy of Student Privacy in University Residences, and stipulated that the Draft Policy not be diluted by merging with any other policy. All three motions were affirmed by Council and the motions carried. (September 25, 1996)

   Action: Deferred, by Council community request, until Spring, 1998 so that recommendations reflecting the 21st century residential communities can be incorporated into the draft for publication. The Communications Committee stated it would continue to refine the Draft Policy.

2. Council approved the Communications Committee’s Proposed Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources, “subject to judicious amendment with regard to Open Expression.” (February 12, 1997)

   Action: A change in wording will be made to substitute “Open Expression Committee” language for the use of “Open Expression monitor” within the Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources. The policy will go into effect on July 1, 1997.

3. Council decided to place the Benefits Redesign proposal on the agenda for the March 5 Council meeting. (February 12, 1997)

   Action: The Benefits Redesign proposal was discussed at the March 5 Council.


   Action: Personnel Benefits Committee chair reported that the committee voted favorably on a series of propositions related to the Benefits Redesign Report, with the exception that the committee was unable to come to an agreement on part-time benefits. In 1997-98, the committee will discuss retirement and disability programs.

5. Council Steering chair recommended that at its first 1997-98 meeting, Steering consider the following resolution and its disposition:

   “In order to implement the requirement of the University Council Bylaws that constituent organizations having representation of the University Council be democratic in both practice and principle, any such organization shall supply, at the beginning of each year, as a condition of its representatives being authorized to sit as members of Council, a clear statement of its current election procedures and a description of its most recent elections and their results.” (March 5, 1997)

   Action: Steering will discuss this resolution at the first Steering meeting of the 1997-98 academic year and will then place it on the Council agenda.

II. Amendments to Bylaws

1. Council Steering chair stated that Steering agreed to recommend to Council abolishing the Student Fulbright Awards Committee, replacing it with a provostial committee. Abolishing a Council committee requires a Bylaws revision by a vote of Council. (April 30, 1997)

   Action: Steering will discuss placing on the 1997-98 Council agenda a proposal to abolish the Student Fulbright Awards Committee of University Council, replacing it with a provostial committee.

2. An amendment was proposed to the Bylaws to add (in chronological order) to Section II. Membership, 1. Composition, a new paragraph stating (1): “One elected representative of the United Minorities Council.” (April 30, 1997)

   Action: A quorum count was called and failed: a quorum was not present; a vote could not be taken.

3. Council discussed the difficulty in conducting votes due to lack of a quorum at Council meetings. A possible solution may be adding provision for a mail ballot to the Bylaws. (April 30, 1997)

   Action: Steering will discuss the question of a mail ballot in the context of needing a quorum to amend the Bylaws. Steering was requested to bring a proposal to Council within the first two Council meetings of 1997-98.

   — C.C.G.
Admissions and Financial Aid

Report on the agenda for discussion September 24, 1997

The Council Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) addressed three subjects during 1996-97:

1. The relevance to current admissions policy of the 1966 McGill Report (and its 1972 addendum), and the extent to which the guidelines outlined in that report have been followed in the admissions procedure in recent years.

2. The continuing effort to identify the funds necessary to maintain the current need-blind admissions policy, and the strength of the administration’s resolve to maintain that policy.

3. The continuing effort by the University to develop reliable data on undergraduate retention, particularly as concerns minority students; an assessment of the quality of those data and of conclusions that can be drawn therefrom; and the committee’s judgment as to how those conclusions should influence policies in the offices of undergraduate admissions and undergraduate financial aid.

The McGill Report

CAFA during 1995-96 reviewed the history of development of the McGill Report; studied the relevance of the recommendations offered in that report to admissions decisions 30 years later; concluded that both the spirit of the report and its specific recommendations are as relevant in 1996 as they were in 1966; and concluded that admissions decisions of the most recent cycle were remarkably consistent with both the spirit and the letter of the McGill recommendations. The only major departure from the guidelines in the McGill Report has been the systematic growth in the number of applicants admitted as straight academic admits. This growth has been accommodated in part by reduction in numbers of admitted dependent of family and alumni.

CAFA in 1995-96 recommended that a review of the extent to which the McGill guidelines had been met during the previous admissions cycle (final admissions statistics for a given year typically do not become available until after the last meeting of CAFA during that year) be undertaken as an annual task of CAFA.

In 1996-97 CAFA determined that the guidelines of the McGill Report had been met in the 1995-96 admissions cycle as well as they had been met in other recent years. CAFA in 1996-97 agreed with CAFA in 1995-96 that a wholesale re-examination of admissions policy, with the objective of superseding the McGill Report, would not be a useful exercise.

Need-Blind Admissions

In a series of presentations by William Schilling, CAFA was briefed on the difficulties Penn is encountering in its efforts to meet the financial-aid requirements of all admitted undergraduates (except foreign admits—see below). The amount of endowment dedicated to undergraduate financial aid is only ~$50 million, which represents about 5% of what would be required to meet all undergraduate financial-aid obligations from restricted funds (Princeton now meets 95% of its graduate financial-aid obligation from restricted funds).

CAFA has been advised that President Rodin, Provost Chodorow, and the Board of Trustees have acknowledged the importance of maintaining a need-blind admissions policy, and that a minimum of $200 million will be sought to add to endowment to supplement endowment funds now designated for undergraduate financial aid. Given identified trends in growth of need among Penn applicants, $200 million in increased endowment will at least prevent any further erosion of our capacity to cover need-blind financial-aid obligations.

CAFA affirmed its support of maintaining need-blind admissions. The need-blind policy of admittance extends to residents of the USA, Canada, and Mexico, but does not extend to other foreign nationals. At the present time, foreign nationals make up ~9% of the undergraduate student body (some of those 9% are aided citizens of Canada or Mexico). Because they do not qualify for direct US federal assistance, foreign nationals typically require a larger university contribution, including direct grant as well as university loans, to meet demonstrated need than do citizens of the USA, and the experience of many US universities has been that the loan-default rate among foreign nationals is much higher than it is among US citizens. For these reasons, and because our financial-aid resources are under so much pressure, Penn has not yet chosen to extend its need-blind policy to all foreign nationals.

CAFA is disturbed by this asymmetry and urges the administration to extend its need-blind policy to all undergraduate applicants as soon as funds are available.

William Schilling encouraged members of CAFA to forward to him any suggestions as to how Penn might go about identifying the funds needed to sustain the need-blind admissions policy. At least one member of CAFA, student member Jon Miller, distributed to the committee a description of two strategies involving bonds sold to, or funds borrowed from, alumni, which would be used to extend loans to foreign undergraduates. Miller’s suggestions were forwarded to William Schilling.

Undergraduate Retention

CAFA reviewed the most recent study of patterns of undergraduate retention, authored by Peter Kuriloff in 1989. That study showed that ~80% of all Penn undergraduates graduated on time, and that ~90% graduated within 6 years. Retention among African-American students has been below those values, but showed a steady improvement for the years that the Kuriloff study addressed.

The Kuriloff study undertook to determine, via a series of detailed interviews with African-American alumni, the reasons for lower retention rates within that population, and concluded that poor academic performance has not been the primary cause of attrition. Those interviews identified a widespread sense of racial isolation within the undergraduate African-American population on campus, an alienation of students by the formidable size of many introductory courses, and an inability of existing financial-aid policies to take into account family financial obligations of many African-American undergraduates. Even given the small number of interviews included in the Kuriloff study, the study showed that high African-American attrition rates represent less a problem of admissions than of disaffection with the undergraduate social environment.

Members of CAFA with many of years of service to the committee recalled that CAFA has repeatedly identified the need for more accurate and more comprehensive data on patterns of undergraduate retention.

CAFA learned at the end of 1996 that Bernard Lentz, director of Institutional Research and Analysis, has been asked by the Office of the Provost to undertake a much more ambitious review of undergraduate retention patterns than has been attempted by the university heretofore. The working group assembled by Bernard Lentz has been asked to report both to Deputy Provost Michael Wachter and to the Council of Undergraduate Deans. CAFA requested that Lentz also share his findings with the committee as those findings emerged.

In two meetings of CAFA we reviewed the procedures and preliminary data of Lentz’ working group, and concluded that recommendations of unprecedented value are likely to emerge from this study. CAFA offered several suggestions to Lentz to add further dimensions to the project, and resolved to make a continuing review of the Lentz study a major objective of CAFA for 1997-98.

— Robert Giegengack, Chair

1996-97 Admissions and Financial Aid Committee

Chair: Robert Giegengack (geology); Faculty: Howard Brody (physics), Larry Gladney (physics), William Graham (materials science), Frieda Hopkins Oulow (nursing), Johannes Pennings (management), Warren Seider (chemistry), David Williams (psychology); Administration: Nancy Streim (GSE); Students: Rob Miller (law), Jon Miller (Col ’97), Kirsha Parker (Wh ’98), Joshua Stein (SEAS ’98), Reid Schneider (Col ’98), Caryn Stivelman (GSE); Ex officio: Terry Conn (VPUL), William Schilling (dir student financ aid), Willis Stetson (dean of admissions); Invited guest: Carrie Spann (assoc dir Wh undergrad div).
Communications
Report on the agenda for discussion September 24, 1997

Background
The Committee met six times during the academic year. The topics addressed and our recommendations concerning them are presented in separate sections below. The first three sections cover the three specific charges given to the Committee by the Council Steering Committee; the next three contain additional issues brought to our attention. We note with some concern that the majority of our time was devoted to matters, all entirely appropriate, arising from or related to Information Systems and Computing (ISC). This, together with a somewhat abbreviated meeting schedule due to staffing changes in the Office of the Secretary, did not permit us to give due attention to other areas within our general charge, such as print media, telecommunications, video communications, and mail services. We did, however, receive presentations from each of our ex officio members, and were reassured that this did not result in neglect of any pressing concerns.

We would like to note that the responsiveness of ISC to our varied needs for information from them has been exemplary. Numerous of their senior staff made themselves available when requested for formal presentations and informal discussions that contributed substantively to the work that we accomplished.

PennNet Modem Pool
This was the most public controversy issue addressed. During the fall, due to unprecedented increases in demand, the modem pool became saturated during periods of peak usage. As a result ISC was forced to introduce time limits for sessions. They further began an aggressive campaign to eliminate invalid and expired network IDs and to provide an alternate access route through a preferred vendor relationship with a commercial Internet service provider. These steps defused the immediate crisis but did not resolve its underlying causes.

The modem pool is funded from the network central service fee (faculty/staff), based on on-campus network addresses, and the general fee (students). These sources are relatively static and neither reflects the level of modem pool usage. Since its costs are proportional to peak usage it has become underfunded as usage has grown. Users have no cost incentive to control their usage, and have come to expect unlimited access. A small number (3%) consume an inordinate fraction of the resources: more than 40 hours/month each during peak periods. Off-campus affiliates, for example in the Health System, historically received free “guest” access. Demand, while sure to grow, is hard to predict. The extension of ResNet throughout the Quad this summer will provide some relief, but many areas, particularly the Health System, have the potential for rapid expansion. These problems must be addressed in the light of technological and regulatory changes. However novel solutions for high speed remote access should not be counted upon within the next two years.

ISC proposes and we endorse an approach with the following components: 1) Continued fine-tuning of session limits and aggressive elimination of non-paying users; 2) Introduction of a fixed annual “guest” fee, or equivalent negotiated lump sum coverage by organizations; 3) Payment of the “guest” fee, the network central service fee, or the general fee should entitle the user to a reasonable level of access at current bandwidths and protocols (perhaps 40 peak hours/month); 4) Usage above the entitlement level should be billed to the user (or sponsoring School) at appropriate rates (of the order of $1/peak hour); 5) Entitlement and usage fees should be designed to incent off-peak usage; 6) Newer services at higher bandwidths and/or new protocols should be billed on a full cost recovery basis; and 7) Options for those with unusually high volume or guaranteed access requirements should be expanded and enhanced (e.g. providing an authentication mechanism for access from an Internet service provider), but when provided by ISC (e.g. private PennNet modem) should be at full cost.

The Computing Resource Center
The walk-in services at the Computing Resource Center, along with the telephone and e-mail consulting services of ISC First Call, have been reorganized as ISC Client Services Group. Many of the Computing Resource Center’s traditional functions, such as evaluation of new software products and new versions of older ones, administration of site licenses and distribution of software, are continuing relatively unchanged under the new structure. Its other front line support operations—the First Call help line, e-mail to help@isc.upenn.edu, and walk-in services at 38th and Locust Walk—are, however, undergoing change as projected in the restructuring plan “A New Model for Computing Services Across Penn” (Almanac Supplement May 7, 1996).

The restructuring plan proposes that front line user support functions should be moved, where feasible, closer to the end user. Local support groups in the Schools, administrative units and residences are beginning to provide the direct end user contact, with ISC providing a supporting role to them. This rationalizes a trend that was already under way in the larger Schools. ISC will offer contracted support groups for those Schools, mainly among the smaller ones, that have no pre-existing group ready to fulfill this function; two have already entered into such an arrangement. As a result of these developments just over 70% of the contacts with the Client Services Group now come from students, with undergraduates slightly outnumbering graduate students.

ISC proposes and we endorse the following evolutionary steps in this plan: 1) The completion of the decentralization of front line support to the Schools and administrative units; 2) Continued development of residential support programs to include all freshman residences and college houses, in parallel with the development of academic residential programs; 3) Gradual extension of these programs to all students in residences and those affiliated with academic residential programs; 4) Continued direct support by ISC’s Client Services Group to all students without residential support programs, while appropriate alternative structures for funding and delivering off-campus student support are explored and developed; and 5) Continued direct support to all faculty, staff and students in critical areas, such as those related to network functionality and virus detection and recovery.

The “Super Internet” Project
Internet 2 represents the next coming generation of Internet communications. Its topology comprises very high bandwidth redundant pathways between “GigaPOP’s”—regional aggregation points operated by consortia of local institutions. Its intention is to provide a range of levels of service, from an enhanced version of the current “best efforts point to point”, that is adequate for applications such as e-mail, to real-time multipoint multimedia communications. Implicit in this is the ability of participants to request and reserve a level of service appropriate to their immediate needs. Many of the details of how this is to be achieved and managed remain to be worked out.

ISC is actively participating in the planning for Internet 2, and is exploring the formation of a local consortium with the possibility of operating a GigaPOP on the University campus. We believe that the University cannot afford to be an onlooker to the next wave of Internet communications technology, and that Internet 2 should be the focus of its resources and efforts. We endorse ISC’s continued involvement in the planning effort and we urge that, when appropriate, funding for the University’s connection be found.

Digital PennCard Pictures
A project has been initiated to use digital photographs in the issuance of PennCards. This was the subject of a pilot program for a cohort of Wharton undergraduates entering this past fall. The Coordinator of the 21st Century Project in the Provost’s Office was charged with developing guidelines to ensure appropriate use of these photographs and to protect individual privacy rights in that use. An interim policy was developed during August in consultation with the past and current chairs of the Committee, conforming in general to the Policy on Privacy of Electronic Information previously approved by the Committee. We endorsed this interim policy as subsequently presented to us.

Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources
The University’s Information Security Officer presented a draft of this policy to the Committee. It incorporates and supersedes the earlier Policy on Ethical Behavior with Respect to the Electronic Information Environment. Experience with the application of the Ethical Behavior policy had led to the recognition of the need for a set of specific rules that interpret the
The committee views the charge to define community as a multi-year effort. Penn is resource-rich in creative ideas and good thinkers. Often, these resources are underutilized for the benefit of our whole enterprise. The committee would like to find a way to include more of these human and intellectual resources in its deliberations. During the next academic year, the committee will reach out to individual faculty, students and community residents, especially those whose voices are not usually heard, to ask them to share with the committee, at least on a one-time basis, some of their ideas about the diverse aspects of community.

As part of the effort to understand relationships to the community, the committee will consider the implementation of a reasonable process of meeting more consistently with community residents to hear concerns, share information and consult on ways to solve problems of mutual concern. This might include attendance at selected meetings in the community by some members of the committee.

The committee will continue to monitor the trend of graduate students’ movement out of West Philadelphia to areas east of the campus. If West Philadelphia is deemed less desirable by our graduate student population, what effect, if any, does this have on the immediate university area and its sense of community? Is there a link between the graduate student trend and faculty movement in and out of the West Philadelphia area?

**Recommendations**

1. The history of a relationship provides a context for understanding the meaning of actions past, present and future. The committee would like to see a student project developed that would review past issues of the *Almanac* and old minutes of the Community Relations Committee to develop an historical context for evaluating Penn’s relationship to its neighbors. The Center for Community Partnerships might be in the best position to initiate and implement such a project.

2. The committee recommends that the Office of Community Relations work closely with the Office of News and Public Affairs to coordinate publicity for community programs and activities and to examine ways to update and better utilize the Community Service Directory in outreach efforts to the University’s neighbors.

3. The committee recommends that the Center for Community Partnerships advise the committee on the feasibility and usefulness of compiling a directory of community groups with whom the University has established and ongoing relationships. This would initially be done for purposes of information sharing.

4. The committee recommends that the Community Service Directory be updated to include updated names and telephone numbers and to correct inaccuracies. The Office of Community Relations has offered to be an entry point for revised and additional information. Further, the committee recommends that the Directory create a section exclusively for recreational activities since these activities provide a readily identifiable, positive match with community needs and interests.

5. The issue of safety and security remains the central issue for students with regard to the quality of their lives. The committee under-
stands that orientation week and the activities by the individual schools that introduce the community to incoming students are critical to shaping student expectations and images of West Philadelphia. The committee recommends that the programmatic effort to bring the students into direct positive contact with the community be increased during orientation week and then be made more consistent during the academic year through particular school activities.

6. The committee recommends that the Penn Kids Camp proposal initiated by the Recreation Department be implemented because it would provide an avenue to improve access and communication between the University’s intramural and extramural community. The experience is unique in that it would be open to the children of faculty/staff, affiliates, West Philadelphia residents, alumni.

7. In order to effectively track the move of university affiliated persons out of the University’s immediate area and to monitor the trends, the committee recommends that faculty and staff population data be added to the student population data that is made available to the committee.

8. The committee recommends that University Council examine the role of University Council Committees in the governance structure of the University.

Conclusion

Penn’s definition of partnering—that is, Penn considers itself one player among others in the community and is looking toward building relationships of shared responsibility for outcomes—can be a very effective framework if Penn remains mindful that its neighbors bring their own definitions of partnering to the table. Moreover, for some of Penn’s neighbors, the framework to which they are committed is viewed by them as distinctly uneven. In this context, Penn’s programs, incentives and agendas must be guided by standards of openness, affordability, acceptability, consistency and continuity. The credibility of our efforts will likely be evaluated by these standards and, in any case, relationship building requires them.

— Margaret Cotroneo, Chair

1996-97 Community Relations Committee

Faculty: Kenneth C. Bovee (med/vet), Christopher Hasty (music), Theodore Hershberg (public policy & hist), Cameron Hurst (Asia & Mid East), Jane Isaacs Lowe (social work), Richard Shell (legal studies); Administration: Chioma Fitzgerald (med), Billie Meeks (GSE), Helen Walker (real estate), one to be named; A-J: Nichelle L. Davis (GSE), Debra Smiley-Kotta (CPPS); Students: Carmella Baxter (Wharton), Ben Cohen (SEAS ’99), Jessica Dodson (Col ’98), Judith Stontonio; Ex officio: Jeanne Arnold (dir African American Resource Ctr), Glenn Bryan (dir community relations), Vinnie Curren (mgr WXPN), Sonia Elliott (acad programs, residence life), Michael Diorka (director, recreation), Stephen Goff (mg dir, Annenberg Center), Ira Harkavy (dir, community partnerships), Diane-Louise Wormaly (assoc treas); Invited guest: Mihaela Farics (housing & res life).

International Programs

Report on the agenda for discussion September 24, 1997

Internationalization is a priority in the University’s strategic plan. The Office of International Programs (OIP) and the Provost’s Council on International Programs have been vigorous in cultivating the international milieu at Penn. Well aware of these activities and the broad mandate that the University Council has given the Committee “to review and monitor issues related to the international programs and other international activities of the University,” the Committee focused its deliberations in academic year 1996-97 on international student life, with additional discussion of post-doctoral students, international alumni outreach and staff exchange programs.

Concentration on these issues allowed the Committee’s efforts to complement the activities of the OIP and the Provost’s Council on International Programs.

The active membership role of the Committee consisted of six standing faculty members (including the chair), two members of the administrative staff, three students—two undergraduates and one graduate—and the director of OIP as an ex-officio member. The Committee met approximately once a month during the academic year. Some of the Committee meetings also included university-related guest participants who were closely involved in the subject matter for discussion. Such guests included representatives from GAPSA, the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, the Development and Alumni Relations Office, and the OIP.

The Committee’s deliberations throughout the year concentrated mainly on international student life, especially graduate students. Discussions covered issues such as orientation programs of OIP, orientation programs of the various departments and schools, establishment of a graduate student center and/or international center, postdoctoral visitors, and safety issues. Other topics covered in the meetings included international alumni outreach, and staff exchange programs.

Orientation Programs of the OIP

The orientation and social/academic programs of the OIP for both undergraduate and graduate students are quite commendable—as described admirably in the Annual Report of the OIP for 1996-97.

The Committee considered various ways of assisting OIP in developing more attention and participation in these programs. Along these lines, the Committee recommends that the University declare an International Students’ Day. Such an event would help the departments focus attention on international students and develop more programs for them, first, in conjunction with the event, and second, more lasting programs. October would be a good time to hold the event—just after orientation and at a time when new students are still new to the campus. The event also would encourage non-international students to attend. The idea would be to attract as many members of the university as possible.
in fact require, faculty interaction across disciplines within the university, while at the same time tapping the international alumni group as a resource for manpower and financial support.

One problem is the absence of a formal mechanism or institutional arrangements within the university for such projects. On a person-to-person basis, this is already occurring through efforts of individual faculties, but the foundations being made individually will disappear if no formal university mechanism is in place. The presence of a university-wide formal supportive structure would encourage faculty in exploring opportunities for such interdisciplinary projects, enhance faculty’s success in obtaining such projects, facilitate the management of such activities, and emphatically establish the global presence of the University.

This issue requires further deliberation by the Committee, possibly in consultation with the Vice Provost for Research.

Staff Exchange Programs
Discussion of this topic dealt with two questions. Would staffers’ roles at the University be enhanced by spending time in a specific function abroad and returning? How would such staff exchanges be arranged? There have been some limited staff exchanges in the past, for example, with the University of Nigeria that has close ties to Penn (but currently on hold because of the political situation there). The few cases of staff exchanges tend to be arranged on an individual basis rather than in a formalized setting.

The Committee judged this issue to be of second priority with precedence to be given to faculty and student exchanges.

International Post-Doctoral Visitors
There is difficulty in providing an orientation program for foreign post-doctoral visitors. The one-on-one system of orientation appears to be the most effective for this group. Their connection to the University is really only through their principal investigator, and therefore, they have no contact with any formal orientation program, and, because of this, they are extremely vulnerable to loss of status.

The University is just now starting to implement systems to ensure that someone besides the visitor’s principal investigator knows of his presence in campus. Department chairs or administrative managers have to be aware of their presence and available to review any visa problems or other issues that may arise. The University also has stated policies about post-doctoral visitors’ rights and responsibilities and information on funding, health insurance benefits, workmen’s compensation, and related subjects. The OIP also has alerted international students and post-doctoral visitors about the recent changes in visa legalities and restrictions.

Results of Past Committee Efforts
For better coordination of the Committee’s deliberations with activities of the Provost’s Council on International Programs, the appointment of the Committee chair as ex-officio member of the Provost’s Council on International Programs was sought and obtained starting in September, 1996.

In the past few years, the Committee has sought to enhance international student life through the establishment of a research writing course for international graduate students.

“The overall goals are to improve writers’ organization of content, use and citation of sources, and clarity of communication.” Such a course has been offered at the University since Spring 1997, carrying one credit unit, not counting towards requirements for a degree.

Recommendations
In summary, the Committee makes the following recommendations for action:
1. An International Students’ Day as an annual University event.
2. A University-wide survey of orientation programs for international graduate students, to be conducted by the Committee, in coordination with the Vice Provost for Graduate Education.
3. Further Committee deliberation on Collaborative efforts between graduate students and the Committee towards an International Center in the University University-wide centralized structure for international interdisciplinary projects, in dialogue with the Vice Provost for Research International post-doctoral visitor

1996-97 Committee on International Programs
Faculty: Roberto S. Mariano (Chair), economics; Jose Cheibub, political science N. Bulent Gultekin, finance; Pedro Ponte-Castaneda, mechanical engineering; Kim Sharp, biochemistry and biophysics; Donald Smith, political science Admin- istration: Lois Ginsberg, Organizational Dynamics. A-3: Shawn Fluck, Alumni Relations. Students: Gerardo Benitez, Wh/C ’99; Meredith Hertz, C ’98; Akif Kirecci, Graduate Student. Ex officio: Joyce Randolph, Director, OIP.

Pluralism
Report on the agenda for discussion September 24, 1997

A. The United Minority Council Request for a Seat on University Council

The Committee met on December 17, 1996, to discuss an issue initially raised in the previous year regarding whether the United Minorities Council should be given a seat on the University Council.

During this meeting, the Committee entertained discussion on the matter in a joint meeting with the Student Affairs Committee, chaired by Professor Tony Rostain. Ms. Susie Lee, the chair of the United Minorities Council was asked to address the issue. Ms. Lee stated that the UMC held a seat on the Council for many years, through the Undergraduate Assembly. But the seat was retracted when the Council concluded that the UMC, as an umbrella organization that oversees the concerns of a multiplicity of minority student groups and is open to participation from any student on campus who shares the organization’s goals, represented a unique request because it provides a voice for many minority groups.

The Committees, voting separately, voted to recommend to the University Council that the United Minorities Council be given a permanent seat on the Council. The motion was carried unanimously.

B. Asian American Student Issues

In two meetings, held on April 23 and May 6, 1997, the Committee met to discuss the experiences of Asian American Students at the University of Pennsylvania. During the meeting on April 23, the Committee entertained the remarks of students: Daniel Lai, Eric Lee, Gloria Lee, and Linda Min, along with those of Professor Rosane Rocher, Director of the Asian American Studies Program and Dr. Alvin Alvarez, Staff Psychologist with the University Counseling Service.

Eric Lee, a Wharton junior and chair of the Asian Pacific Student Coalition (APSC) opened his remarks with the observation that it is difficult for Asian American students to find a place in the community, largely due to the lack of any visible signs of an institutional presence in the form of Asian American faculty or administrators, which makes it difficult for students to find mentors and advisors. Moreover, Asian American students face very difficult—and unique—pressures when it comes to career choices, often feeling that a career in business or the sciences is the only avenue open to them, even if they have interests in the humanities or the arts. Though the figure of Asian American student representation in the student body is reported at 25%, this number includes international students and only addresses undergraduate students, not graduate students.

Ms. Linda Min, chair of the Undergraduate Advisory Board of the Asian American Studies Program, underscored the lack of faculty support, stating that she had had to create, in lieu of a major in Asian American Studies, the first individualized major in Asian American Studies. The arrival of Mark Chiang, in English, and Grace Kao in Sociology represents
a beginning, but there is still only a minor. As a senior, Ms. Min stated that there was little support for her work: she could not find a thesis advisor for her senior thesis and there was very little in the way of a comprehensive gathering of the scholarly literature in the field. Though she would like to pursue graduate work in the field of Asian American Studies, CPPS could tell her nothing useful nor could she draw from the experiences of her peers.

Ms. Gloria Lee, a senior and founding chair of the APSC, noted that students have expressed interest in Asian American issues, but this energy is not matched at the senior administrative level. In light of the dearth of Asian American faculty—or faculty sympathetic to Asian American issues—Ms. Lee stated again the numbers of Asian American students who feel pressured by their families into careers in law, business, and medicine. There was a clear need, she argued, for the University to become more sensitive to these pressures and to address them more directly. Further, in light of the numbers of Asian American students in the Penn student body, it was curious that Asian American history is not a regular offering in the History department, which has no faculty members in the area, hence the University sends the message that while it is happy to report the large number of Asian American students for purposes of recruitment, it does not acknowledge the contributions of Asian Americans to American history and culture.

Finally, Daniel Lai, vice chair of Political Affairs of the APSC, noted that there is an increasing difficulty for Asian American students at Penn to be involved with the Philadelphia community, given the fact that there is no Asian American Resource Center.

Overall, the students repeatedly addressed the manner in which they felt misinformed by the University on issues of diversity, which speaks to the value placed on the minority student experience, but which actually seems to place an emphasis on the problems of African American students and not Asian students. Though the students acknowledged the importance of dealing with such issues, they felt that this was often at their expense. In view of this, Ms. Lee emphasized the importance of Asian American students being able to develop a comfort level with faculty and administrators based on shared backgrounds. Rather than spending their time distinguishing how their problems are unique, the students felt that more faculty and staff with a background in Asian American issues could provide them with the sorts of guidance they feel is essential to academic success at Penn. It needs to be emphasized here that the students made it clear that such support need not come from persons of Asian American descent. Rather, they felt that someone well-versed in Asian American culture and issues would be equally effective.

What is equally important, however, are the dissenting views of Pluralism committee member, Alan Kors (Professor of History). Professor Kors voiced his discomfort with the idea of equating “blood and culture,” arguing that first and second generation immigrant experiences was more common than most people are aware. Moreover, he argues that Universities do not deal well with “human problems” and used the example of how many resources are put into the retention of African American students, despite the fact that the retention rate for African American students continues to languish behind that of other groups. In Professor Kors’s view, this suggests that Universities cannot solve human problems by administrative means and should resist the impulse to do so.

Rather than relate the discussion in its most minute detail, I append a copy of the e-mail I received from Mr. Eric Lee, the Chair of the Asian Pacific Student Coalition, which lays out the issues and concerns of the Asian Pacific American community at Penn. It is important that the students speak for themselves in this regard and so I suggest that careful attention be paid to the students’ concerns. What I recommit, as Acting Chair, are three courses of action:

1) This issue be dealt with at the highest administrative levels: Asian American students comprise nearly 25% of the minority student population at the University of Pennsylvania, it is therefore in the best interest of the administration to take this demographic seriously and formulate a dialogue around this matter.

2) The Pluralism Committee resume discussion of this issue during the course of the 1997-98 academic year. Perhaps a sub-committee can be appointed to gather more information and a report be made to President Rodin and Provost Chodorow that will take into account Senior Surveys from Asian American students, the latest psychological and sociological data on Asian American issues in higher education (e.g. what sorts of problems do these students have, how they deal with stress, is their presence marginalized on college campuses; what are the limitations of the “model minority” construction?), and input from Asian Pacific American student leaders.

3) Asian American faculty and staff be consulted and approached for their input on these issues.

It is the hope of a majority of the Committee on Pluralism that these recommendations be strongly considered as a course of action.

Herman Beavers, Acting Chair

1996-97 Committee on Pluralism

Faculty: Rebecca Freeman (education), Stephen Gale (reg sci), Kathleen Hall (GSE), Alan Charles Kors (history), Ann Mayer (legal studies), Jorge Santiago-Aviles (elec engr), two to be named; Administration: Chris Cataldo (resource planning), Lynn Seng (medicine), A-J: Debra James (GSFA), Yvonne McClean (real estate), Patricia-Anne Meier (law), Students: Ginny Craig (Edu), Jon Davies (Col ’97), Linda Grabner (SAS), Nicole Keating (Annenberg), Hayley Lattman (Col ’97), Jennifer Malkin (CAS ’99); Ex officio: Jeanne Arnold (dir African American Res Ctr), Christopher Dennis (dir housing & res life), Elena DiLapi (dir Penn Women’s Ctr), Susie Lee (chair United Minorities Council), Joyce Randolph (dir inst prog), Scott Reikofski (dir frat/soror affairs), Karen Wheeler (chair A-3 Assembly), Terri White (dir academic support prog), Marie Witt (chair PPSA).

Addendum to the Report of the Committee on the Pluralism:

Issues and Concerns of the Asian Pacific American Community

Drafted by the Asian Pacific Student Coalition, an umbrella organization for 13 Asian student groups on campus, representing the interests and concerns of the Asian and Asian American community at Penn.

1. Recruitment of underrepresented Asian ethnic groups, i.e. Southeast Asians
   —The representation of Asians at Penn are concentrated only in a few ethnic groups and lacks representation of certain ethnic groups, many of which live in underprivileged residential areas.

2. Admissions policies
   —According to past studies on Penn’s admissions policies, there is strong evidence that the University discriminates against Asians. There is a discrepancy between the academic qualifications of the Asian applicant pool and the actual acceptance rate. Further investigation is needed.

3. Student Life Support
   —There is a severe lack of APA support services and staff. Currently, the only position designated for the service and support of APAs is located in the GIC as a part-time graduate student position, far from enough for such a large community. There needs to be more!

4. Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Representation
   —Again, there is a lack of Asian American representation at the faculty, staff, and administrative level. Not only does this lead to lack of APA academic expertise and knowledge, but no available mentors or resources for APA students on issues sensitive to our culture.

5. Retention efforts need to be made for those APAs who are here at the University. The University has proven to be an unresponsive place for APAs at the higher level.
   —Distinction between Asian American faculty and those who have particular interests in Asian American issues. Need to work on recruiting those who have expertise and can work effectively with students also.

6. Curriculum Development
   —More funding for the expansion of the recently created Asian American Studies Program. Without funding, it’s difficult to attract other scholars and experts in the field to develop the program to a major. The University benefits by being a leader in that academic field. There needs to be further institutionalization of the program.

7. Scholarships and research grants for Asian American students and/or students pursuing Asian American Studies and research
   —Many Asian Americans focus only on certain areas of study because of social and family pressures. Incentives to persuade them to study other fields and professions need to be established, and the better representation of APAs in all areas of life. Adds to new ideas and sensitivities.

   —Also, funding for research grants in Asian American studies contributes to the field of study both for the student and the program.

8. Development of an Asian American Resource Center
   —Again, the only position designated for the service and support of APAs is located in the GIC as a part-time graduate student position, far from enough for such a large community. There needs to be more!

9. Academic and extracurricular setting needed for such a large community at Penn.

10. Need for more performance space on campus
   —A plight that faces most student organizations, the APA community is very much culturally-based, and shows and performances are vital. The University is lacking the space available for student organizations to hold shows, threatening the existence and activity of Asian student groups on campus.