Committee on Academic and Related Affairs

Charge #1: Discuss the global engagement initiatives of the University with particular attention to issues such as: central funding and coordination for these initiatives, funding for students to study abroad, need-blind admissions for international students, and the adequacy of current resources for international students.

In the past, the Committee on Academic and Related Affairs has had concerns about the University’s (as opposed to individual school’s) role in global-engagement initiatives. For example, the University has seemed unwilling to develop or continue to support certain international programs, such as the French Institute for Culture and Technology or the European Union Centers of Excellence, which received funding from outside Penn and would have been in keeping with the goals of an international university.

In discussing our charge with Gayle Christensen, Advisor to the Provost and the President on International Initiatives, it appears that the central administration at Penn has embarked on a number of University-wide global initiatives. Examples of these include the Distinguished International Scholars Initiative and the Provost’s and the President’s effort to select international partners for Penn among outstanding universities and institutions around the world, beginning with Tsinghua University in Beijing, a university with ties to the Chinese Academy of Science.

Other efforts under consideration include the extension of need-blind admission to international students, fund-raising for international student aid through Penn’s current campaign, and the Hewlett Award for overseas internships. Of course, the current international economic crisis may have a bearing on any immediate movement towards these goals.

We have called the Study Abroad Program with Geoffrey Gee, Director of Study Abroad Programs, Office of International Programs (OIP). He indicated that over the past five years, the number of Penn undergraduates who studied abroad through this program has averaged 630 annually. We were glad to learn that students who are eligible to receive financial aid, including Penn grants, may apply their aid package to study on a Penn Abroad program. 34% of participants in 2008-09 received some form of financial aid. Concerns were articulated by some Committee members as to the adequacy of this amount and whether the savings due to the generally lower tuition of the institutions abroad as compared to Penn should be passed on to the Penn students.

Our concerns regarding the adequacy of the current resources for international students were addressed to Rodolfo Altamirano, Director, International Student and Scholar Services, Office of International Programs. He indicated that the existence, quality, and the quantity of resources for international students varied by their nature. He divided them in four categories:

(1) Resources for visas and immigration: they are centrally located in one place and generally well supported.

(2) Resources for academic support: they are available, however, most of the resource providers are not trained to work specifically with international students. Staff lacks training in intercultural competence and cultural-based skills to work with them. International students need more resources for internships and job searches.

(3) Resources for campus life and culture: resources are very scattered. International students may not always be aware of all that is available to them. Resources to allow them to develop intercultural communication skills are minimal.

(4) Resources for student finance: Limited funding and scholarship are available for international students from the University. Most funding comes from the individual schools and is directed at the graduate level.

We were met with Mr. Altamirano’s thoughtful and innovative responses to the needs of international students at Penn. We have attached below a chart prepared by Mr. Altamirano, and we recommend continued support for his initiatives.

Recommendations

1) We recommend movement towards need-blind admission for international undergraduate students.

2) We encourage continued support for international programs from the central administration.

Charge #2: Discuss Penn’s use of educational technology and how it compares to its peer institutions in the adoption of educational technology.

On November 10, the committee met with Ira Winston, IT Executive Director for SAS, SEAS, and Design, John MacDermott, IT Director for SAS-Computing, and Anu Vedantham, director of the Weigle Information Commons of the Van Pelt Library to discuss Penn’s use of educational and information technology.

The panel explained that Penn has a decentralized technology staff. As a result there is only limited collaboration among schools, and the library has taken over the job of implementing and supporting many University-wide projects such as Blackboard.

Blackboard remains the primary tool used in most courses at Penn. Only Wharton, which has its own proprietary courseware system, does not use Blackboard. Both faculty and students have become accustomed to Blackboard, and it seems to serve many needs. There is, however, an open source alternative, Sakai, which has been adopted for some courses and committee meetings at Penn. Sakai has some significant advantages over Blackboard. It is free, feature rich, and more user-friendly than Blackboard. Because Sakai is an open source project, however, it would require more technical support from Penn’s IT staff than Blackboard, which comes with a support contract. The costs in time and effort to switch entirely to Sakai might be too high. But the committee feels that it would be beneficial to move more courses to Sakai, both because it seems to be a superior product and because it is important to support University-led open source projects.

Ira Winston explained that the schools of Arts and Sciences and Engineering have adopted a rule of placing the majority of their effort into supporting the 80% of faculty that account for the average technology users. Fewer resources and less time is devoted to the 10% of advanced users at the top and the 10% of faculty whose use of educational technology is minimal. This seems to be entirely appropriate. But according to Mr. Winston’s own account, Penn pays less attention to the 10% of advanced users and early adopters than peer institutions. The committee would note the importance of keeping up with advances in educational technology, and encourage Penn’s schools to create more opportunities for experimental programs. The School of Arts and Sciences does support some experimental programs through its course technology grants program, which seems to be a good model.

One recent project that has begun to pick up momentum is the podcasting of courses so that students can review lectures. This is already a common practice at many other universities and at Penn’s medical school. Select courses in other schools at Penn have begun to podcast lectures, and the service gets very high ratings from students. Podcasting also seems to result in better performance on exams. A plan to outfit central-pool classrooms with podcasting equipment has recently been delayed, because of financial concerns. The committee hopes that the project will not be forgotten when funds become available again.

The Weigle Information Commons of the Van Pelt library has become a central hub on campus for educational technology. It provides spaces for students and faculty to use multimedia technology, to prepare coursework, and to work on extracurricular projects. The Commons also provides training in the use of hardware, software, and research methods. Hundreds of students use the Commons every semester to complete multimedia assignments for coursework. Uses range from creating Mashup videos to designing posters to preparing slide presentations. One of the most important elements of the Commons is that it allows faculty to integrate technology-dependent coursework into their courses without having to train students or support the technology themselves. The Commons has been a great asset to Penn, and the committee would love to see more faculty take advantage of it. One interesting question for the future of the Commons is how much effort must be put into updating and expanding its...
Committee on Academic and Related Affairs

(continued from page 1)

technological capabilities and how much effort will be put into its becoming a training area and expect that many students have significant computing power themselves.

Recommendations:
1) The committee recommends increased support for open source software, including Sakai.
2) The committee recommends that more resources be devoted to experimentation with new educational technology.
3) The committee hopes that more classrooms will be equipped with podcasting equipment when resources become available.

Charge #3 Revisit some of the concerns regarding the consistency of communication of ethical standards across the University and follow up on suggestions put forth during the 2007-2008 academic year.

The committee received a visit on December 15, 2008 from Susan Herron, Director, Office of Student Conduct, Elizabeth Scheyder, Instructional Technology & Pedagogy Support Services for Faculty, SAS, Marjorie Hassan, Publication Services, Van Pelt Library.

Discussion focused on the use or potential for use of specialized software for detection of plagiarized text. SafeAssign and Turn It In are the primary software programs available. Blackboard has purchased SafeAssign and, by August 2008, it has been incorporated into the upgraded Blackboard software. Although it is currently not available for use, Penn hopes to turn the feature on in the Fall 2009 semester.

Students’ papers can be checked against the SafeAssign database, and against other Penn students’ papers, but the committee expressed the wish not to allow our students’ papers to be added to the SafeAssign database, which is available to other participating universities. The SafeAssign server is off-site and needs to be made compliant with our privacy policy. It may be possible to purge personal information from papers, to anonymize them, but many faculty are concerned about outsourcing to a commercial company and abrogating control over the process. SafeAssign is described by the Blackboard administration as follows:

[SafeAssign is] a tool that compares submitted assignments against a set of academic essays to identify areas of overlap. SafeAssign can be used to prevent plagiarism and to create opportunities to help students identify how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

SafeAssign draws from several different databases: the Internet, ProQuest, ABI/Inform database, institutional document archives, and the Global Reference Database, which includes content submitted into SafeAssign from Blackboard-powered institutions. ...SafeAssign content must be created itself, and ... previouly created Assignments cannot be integrated with SafeAssign. Plagiarism detection for computer code is also available, but not as part of SafeAssign.

One concern raised during the meeting had to do with whether faculty would use this facility to any significant degree. As a whole, faculty do not appear to see an increase in plagiarism, which in any case seems to be considered a low-level problem. This is also coupled with the more general issues of academic integrity, and to what constitutes plagiarism.

The Office of Student Conduct website at Penn has a link to the Pennbook, which in turn lists the Code of Academic Integrity, part B of which defines plagiarism:

B. Plagiarism: using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person’s paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else’s ideas without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.

This implies possible gray areas concerning citation of other work, but lacks depth.

Penn’s plagiarism policy is expressed in the following terms:

If you present someone’s words, thoughts or data as your own, you are committing plagiarism—you are stealing. The location of the information is irrelevant: when it comes to plagiarism, information from the Internet is equivalent to information from a physical book or journal.

To avoid plagiarism you must cite the original author every time you:
• Use an author’s exact written or spoken words. In this case, you must also identify the words by enclosing them with quotation marks or indenting the quote on both sides of the margin.
• Paraphrase someone’s written or spoken words.
• Use facts provided by someone else that are not common knowledge.
• Make significant use of someone’s ideas or theories.

It is also plagiarism to pay a person or Internet service for a paper, hand in someone else’s paper as your own, or cut and paste text from the Internet to your paper without citing the source.

Consequences:
• Students caught plagiarizing may face either academic or disciplinary negative consequences. Instructors who determine that a paper includes plagiarized material can take academic measures, such as giving a failing grade for the paper. If the instructor decides that disciplinary measures should be taken, the case will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. If the student is found responsible following formal procedures, the student may face a number of disciplinary sanctions, including suspension. Whatever the sanction, academic integrity action by the Office of Student Conduct becomes a part of the student’s permanent record and may have an adverse impact on future academic and career goals.

Penn’s disciplinary process is described in The Charter of the University of Pennsylvania Student Disciplinary System.

The above provides a definition of plagiarism, but appears to stop short of guiding students along an appropriate path through an area where even faculty members are often challenged: How to cite others’ work appropriately:

• How to distinguish between “common knowledge” and “intellectual property.”

What to present in a report, which may be under the name of one student but will often incorporate the work of others.

The Office of Student Conduct website posts four links to other universities, which have very different documentation on academic integrity issues including plagiarism:


It is clear that the increasing use of web-based resources and other methods for document digitization and information transfer creates more potential opportunities for violation of academic codes of integrity, not limited to the activities of undergraduates. It is recommended that Penn develop its own detailed information resource on plagiarism, at least to the level of the Northwestern document (Link 1 above). This would not only highlight the definition and likely consequences of the activity, but would also provide scholarly advice in some depth. The presence of such a local document would also avoid the inevitable problem with off-campus web-based links, which is that they expire. (Also, regarding the four links above, links 3 & 4 were in fact dead as of March 26, and link 2 had been redirected.)

The likely impact on students of the implementation of a software approach to course security is unknown. The committee feels that it will be important for students and Blackboard may be using plagiarism detection software. Most important, in implementing such procedures, faculty will need to weigh the advantages of additional security against the actual risk, which is assessed at no more than a few percent of all students, and the inevitable extra time involved. Also, it is critical not to undermine faculty-student relations by potentially creating an adversarial situation.

Finally, it is recommended that SafeAssign, and its capabilities, be advertised widely to faculty members well in advance of its implementation. At the moment, it can be found via a search of the Penn website, but even now SafeAssign should probably be listed inside on Blackboard as a forthcoming development.

Recommendations
1) The committee commends SAS, the library, and the Office of Student Conduct on their oversight of the adoption of plagiarism detection software. We encourage them to continue their efforts to protect student work from ownership and access by third parties and to ensure that the servers and treatment of content meet University privacy standards.
2) The committee wants to stress how important it is that faculty and students be made aware of both the existence of the software on Blackboard and its methods of operation.
3) On a larger scale, the committee feels strongly that the University needs to better articulate its plagiarism policies and communicate them to both students and faculty.

Charge #4: Review and discuss the committee’s general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given highest priority for the committee’s work in 2009-2010.

1) Many universities including Harvard and MIT have adopted Open Access publication policies for their faculty. In addition, recent and pending U.S. legislation addresses the open access requirements for research funded by the National Institutes of Health. Should Penn consider an Open Access policy? If so, how should it be implemented?
2) How effective is the podcasting of course lectures? Does the University need to enhance its facilities for podcasting? Are there best practices to adopt?

Committee on Academic & Related Affairs 2008-2009
Chair: Peter Decherney (SAS); Staff Member: Karen Lawrence (Provoce’s Office); Faculty: Kathleen Boesze-Battaglia (Dental), Peter Dodson (Veterinary Medicine), Sohrab Rabii (SEAS), Richard Salcido (Medicine), Paul Shaman (Wharton), Kristen Stromberg-Childers (SAS), Michael Topp (SAS);
Graduate Students: Jessica Lautin (SAS), Rachel Pereira (Law); Undergraduate Students: Zach Fuchs (Wharton), Leonard Tso (College); Staff: Susanne Donovan (UPHS), Ken Gricich (College Houses and Academic Services), Erin Lemons (Career Services).

2 www.upenn.edu/almanac

ALMANAC SUPPLEMENT May 5, 2009
Committee on Campus and Community Life

The University Council Committee on Campus and Community Life met four times as a full committee this year to address charges as follows:

1. Continue to work on the issue of graduate student housing with Facilities and Real Estate Services (FRES) to ensure the adequacy and affordability of these facilities to attract and retain the best and brightest graduate students to Penn.
2. Meet with Vice President for Government and Community Affairs Jeffrey Cooper and review the Economic Inclusion Plan.
3. Address general health issues for students and assess the effects of relocation of Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) to assure the quality of campus life.
4. Review and discuss the committee’s general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given highest priority for the committee’s work in 2009-2010.

There was excellent attendance and engagement at committee meetings from all represented populations, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as staff. More than half of the committee’s members were able to attend each of the meetings, which was an improvement from last year.

Activities in Each Charge Area

1. Graduate student housing—The Chair and staffer consulted graduate students and faculty on the committee, as well as leaders in Facilities and Real Estate Services and Housing and Conference Services to learn about efforts and updates related to graduate housing. All parties noted ongoing dialogue and work in this area and felt that the committee’s significant focus on this topic last year had shown benefit. Chair determined that absent major new developments, this topic would continue to be worked on by the parties involved as updates provided to the committee as appropriate in the future.
2. Economic Inclusion Plan and meeting with Vice President for Government and Community Affairs Jeffrey Cooper—The committee hosted Vice President Cooper who shared details of the University’s extensive efforts toward economic inclusion, particularly related to procurement, employment, construction, and communications. VP Cooper described efforts to ensure effective use of local vendors and contractors, as well as programs to include minority and women-owned businesses. VP Cooper also mentioned a pipeline program, used primarily by the Health System, to help largely high school students and other potential applicants with employment-related skills and training. Committee members appreciated the update on the University’s efforts toward inclusion and inquired about participating in communications efforts.
3. Relocations of Student Health Service, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT)—The committee met in the new location of Student Health Service at 3535 Market Street to tour the SHS facility first-hand. Committee members were impressed with the design and capacity of the new space, particularly compared to the more restrictive former facility in Penny Tower. The committee heard a presentation from Student Health Service Director Evelyn Wiener, who gave an overview of the Health Service’s operations, which further emphasized additional benefits of the new space for patient privacy, provider workflow, and improved use of technology. Dr. Wiener also mentioned SHS’ strong interest in preventative care and patient education, in coordination with other campus health and wellness partners.

The committee also met with Counseling and Psychological Services Director William Alexander who advised the committee of the recent consolidation of CAPS into two floors of the Ann Taylor Loft Building at 36th and Walnut Streets, a move expected to provide more convenient centralized access to mental health services for students. Dr. Alexander provided an overview of CAPS’ service and data on students served. In particular, Dr. Alexander noted CAPS’ interest this year in outreach, both topical, as with eating, sleep, stress and other issues, and to potentially underserved populations, like international students. Dr. Alexander noted a significant increase in service to international students and credited staff, students, and campus centers for increased awareness to mental health. Thanks to a new triage system for students seeking appointments, Dr. Alexander also noted a reduction in student crisis situations. In response to earlier committee concerns about wait times at CAPS, Dr. Alexander mentioned ongoing efforts to see students more quickly and efficiently, including the new centralized location, but noted that wait times for initial appointments, while somewhat improved, remain of concern.

Committee heard descriptions of MERT services and inquired about next steps, which are being coordinated with Public Safety and other campus partners. Drs. Wiener and Alexander noted ongoing discussion about the role of MERT in campus health and wellness operations.

Committee heard comments and suggestions from members about issues of concern to them and constituents across campus. The committee’s recommendations are reflected below.

Other Committee Activities

Additionally, the committee also considered other areas of campus and community life that interested members this year. These included public safety and student community involvement, particularly in difficult economic conditions.

1. Public Safety—Vice President for Public Safety Maureen Rush met with the committee and provided a comprehensive update on public safety activities. In particular, VP Rush highlighted efforts and significant accomplishments related to diversity, crime, crime prevention and education, lighting, and emergency preparedness. VP Rush also described the new Vertical Town Watch program, aimed to improve safety in off-campus, particularly high-rise residential spaces. VP Rush further detailed some of the challenges presented by the South Street Bridge closure and ongoing efforts to bolster security for the entire Penn community, particularly as eastern expansion efforts ensue. Committee members appreciated the detailed update and felt well-informed and engaged by Public Safety’s service and educational efforts over the past year.

2. Student community involvement, particularly in difficult economic conditions—The committee met with Civic House Director David Grossman, who provided an overview of student community-based activity. These efforts included Civic House, the Netter Center, Fox Leadership, as well as individual schools and other programs. Dr. Grossman noted the wide range of activities in which students participate, in West Philadelphia, and throughout the city, nation, and the world. While Dr. Grossman suggested the economic conditions had not had a major impact on student volunteerism as yet, he noted the heightened interest of Civic House and other partners to support student needs, of all types, including transportation, scheduling, and other resources. Dr. Grossman also described the Civic Scholars program, now in its second year, and highlighted its effort to engage a special group of student civic leaders who engage in a dedicated program involving academic coursework and community service.

Priority for the Committee’s Work in 2009-2010

1. Follow-up on recent committee areas of interest, including public safety, graduate housing, and provision of mental health services to ensure the highest quality University experience for students, faculty, and staff.
2. Continue to assess the impact of difficult economic conditions on campus and community life activities for students, faculty, and staff and other stakeholders. Assert the University is taking appropriate steps to address evidenced needs.
3. Investigate particular needs of students with families, including child care, family housing, and other facility issues, to assure student needs are addressed.

Committee on Campus & Community Life Members 2008-2009

Chair: Philip Nichols (Wharton); Staff Member: Matthew Waller (VPUL); Faculty: Joretha Bourjolly (SP2), Brenda Casper (SAS), J. Matthew Hartley (GSE), Aravind Joshi (CIS), Eileen Sullivan-Marx (Nursing), Henry Teune (SAS); Graduate Students: Rosa Mathai (Dental), Nikki Thorpe (Design); Undergraduate Students: Brett Perlmuter (SAS), Alec Webley (SAS); Staff: Julie Lzynski (Alcohol and Other Drug Program Initiatives), Shaheddah Saalim (Netter Center).

ALMANAC SUPPLEMENT May 5, 2009 www.upenn.edu/almanac 3
Committee on Diversity and Equity

Specific Charges:
1. Develop more concrete suggestions for increasing diversity among standing faculty at Penn.
2. Recommend a series of qualitative methods for assessing Penn’s campus climate that might be used in collaboration with the data collected from the COFHE survey, in an attempt to explain and address any potential issues.
3. Continue to work with the Office of the Provost to ensure that a version of the diversity webpage has been examined and critiqued (in preparation for online accessibility by 2009-2010).
4. Review and discuss the committee’s general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given highest priority for the committee’s work in AV 2009-2010.

Part 1: Overview and Summary of Main Recommendations

The committee met six times this academic year. It also formed subcommittees that convened separately. Each subcommittee focused on one of the three specific charges. One of the subgroups was created to review Penn’s implementation of (and compliance with) the University’s gender identity (non-discrimination) policy. Each subcommittee prepared a final report, and those reports were integrated into this document.

1. We recommend that the University reorganize the “Target of Opportunity” process such that all academic departments are specifically asked to produce lists of potential candidates that fit their self-assessed curricular/thematic needs. Such lists should be submitted to the “Target of Opportunity” Committee at the start of each academic year and used to help the committee produce more specific applicant solicitations along with general job postings/listings. This model should replace an earlier configuration that sometimes found departments asked to respond, relatively late in the process, to candidates vetted without specific attention to their self-assessed hiring goals.

2. We recommend that the University create a relatively small two-year or three-year postdoctoral fellowship open to newly minted PhDs in the humanities, the sciences, and the natural sciences. The fellowship should be thematically organized around research into questions of “diversity” (broadly conceived). The cohorts of three to five fellows could be vetted by specific departments, formally housed in those same departments, and informally considered as potential hires upon completion of the program.

3. We recommend that the University continue to expand its commitment to quantitative climate assessment on campus and enlist a small cadre of Penn faculty in the social sciences to design mechanisms to “get behind the numbers” provided by PULSE and COFHE by utilizing qualitative empirical techniques—some mixture of focus groups and open-ended interviews. The faculty might also come up with a limited and ethical way to deploy participant-observation.

4. We recommend that the University push for each School to add a “diversity” link to its individual homepage and that Penn’s main webpage include a similar tab linked to a Presidential statement on diversity, the Provost’s page, Schools’ respective diversity pages, and other campus units with diversity-related web content. (The Appendix includes a list of current Penn sites that might merit inclusion, see www.upenn.edu/secretary/council/DiversityEquityReport08-09appendix.pdf.) Faculty should also play a role in determining how the notion of “diversity” is defined online, and the site might work best as a joint venture sponsored/funded by the President’s Office and the Provost’s Office while administered by the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity.

5. We recommend that the University rationalize and publicize its commitments to gender-neutral inclusion by listing all gender-non-specific restrooms on Penn’s website, providing more accessible information about gender-neutral housing options, updating forms requiring about gender by including broader options, installing private and individual-use shower/privacy rooms on Penn’s website, providing more accessible information about gender-neutral housing options, updating forms inquiring about gender by offering options for gender identity (non-discrimination) policy. Each subcommittee prepared a final report, and those reports were integrated into this document.

Part 2: More Detailed Discussions of these Recommendations

I. Specific Suggestions for Increasing Diversity Among Standing Faculty at Penn

The committee chose to emphasize its commitment to the idea that Penn should continue to be explicit and coordinated in its efforts to aggressively promote initiatives aimed at recruiting and hiring a diverse faculty, efforts that work best if proactively supported by the central administration and each of Penn’s 12 Schools. The committee also wants to make sure that any expansive and multifaceted definition of “diversity” continues to adamantly include an abiding concern for promoting the recruitment and support of under-represented minority (URM) faculty. For instance, there are many ways to organize investments in diversity, and the justified call for further globalizing of the University should not come at the expense of Penn’s longstanding commitments to robust forms of URM inclusion.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

a. We recommend that the Administration champion data-driven commitments to addressing gender-based and racial/ethnic hiring disparities in various Schools across campus. This should also include continuing faculty sensitization to unconscious biases that inform how candidates are assessed.

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\[ More Detailed Discussions of these Recommendations I. Specific Suggestions for Increasing Diversity Among Standing Faculty at Penn \]

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d. We recommend that the Administration consider creating a standard model for clarifying the University’s promotion requirements and retention procedures. One possible mechanism would be implementing the use of a handbook, discussed in the April 2008 report (Almanac: May 6, 2008) that is transparent and clearly outlines a road map to success. The School of Medicine has a workshop on “Promotion A to Z” that might serve as one model of such a reference book. Of course, there is some ambiguity and uncertainty that will always be intrinsic to the process, but the University should make sure to address any lingering characterizations of the tenure process as somehow capricious. Moreover, Penn should consider some kind of post-decision analysis to ensure that faculty members have a sense of why proposed hires or promotion cases do not succeed. Of course, we have to be mindful of privacy issues, but there might be a way to keep the cases anonymous and use them as mechanisms for feedback or about how files are assessed.

e. We recommend that the University show a stronger presence (and strengthen its visibility) with respect to diversity issues by recruiting at National and Regional Conferences (such as SNMA and BLHO) and the Compact for Faculty Diversity’s annual meeting. There are also specific conferences/venues that provide space for accessing URM pools. These should be proactively sought.

f. Our subcommittee on Faculty Diversity shared its findings with the Faculty Senate and has provided them with the full report submitted to the D & E Committee in April 2008. Both groups are in agreement on the core issues regarding the importance of diversity, and both groups supported the development of a stand-alone climate survey. We recommended a meeting with Reverend William Gipson, Vice Provost for the University’s commitment to diversity, a commitment that extends to every aspect of its academic, cultural, and campus life. While various schools, departments and programs have all demonstrated commitment to diversity via individual web pages, the University would be more effectively served by the development of a resource which links these separate pages. We believe that the climate around diversity via individual web pages, the University would be more effectively served by the development of a resource which links these separate pages. We believe that the climate around diversity issues could be improved by the development of a resource which links these separate pages. We believe that the climate around diversity issues could be improved by the development of a resource which links these separate pages.

2. Assessing Penn’s Campus Climate

The committee believes that the release of the PULSE survey to undergraduates in March 2009 signaled an important step in the right direction by having several climate-related questions included on that instrument. That being said, however, our Subcommittee on the matter has convinced us to recommend that the Administration very seriously consider the implementation of a stand-alone climate survey.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

a. The Subcommittee recommended that the COFHE Senior Exit Survey data that was presented to the April 20, 2008 University Council meeting by Associate Provost Binns. Most notably, the Subcommittee recognized that the low response rate among African American and Latino students. The Subcommittee also recognized that, although undergraduates responded favorably to numerous aspects of undergraduate life, the notable outlier was “satisfaction of climate for minority students.” This key statistic fell lower than Ivy League peers for underrepresented students, international students, and white students. This is something that requires continued interrogation.

b. We recommend that the Administration strengthen its efforts to publicize the survey process in order to improve the visibility and usefulness of future data. This can include incentivizing the survey or using/creating an ad for distribution in campus-wide publications, which are strategies that have been deployed successfully at other schools.

c. We recommend that if the Administration continues to administer the COFHE Survey that it should clarify with the Council on Financing Higher Education what survey questions on “sense of community” and “climate for minority students” actually mean/capture.

d. This Subcommittee met with Reverend William Gipson, Vice Provost on Equity and Access, on February 12, 2009 to discuss the newest instrument used to assess undergraduate life, PULSE. Reverend Gipson mentioned that the PULSE Survey would assess climate issues and would be sent to the entire undergraduate body. Rev. Gipson also emphasized that the survey was considered a softer version of COFHE in that it would take substantially less time to complete and would provide a quicker and more flexible way to assess undergraduate life. In showing the Subcommittee several of the questions, many members acknowledged the inclusion of several suggestions from the October 16, 2008 Diversity and Equity Meeting with Bob Nelson (from the Provost’s Office). Most notably, these suggestions concerned demographic questions involving class, race, gender, and sexual identity. Subcommittee members recognized that PULSE contained questions addressing climate, but it was one portion of a much more general survey. We believe that the climate around the institution, however, is of utmost importance in assessing undergraduate life and might demand a more specifically tailored intervention. During a Subcommittee meeting with Rev. Gipson, he emphasized that any survey instrument must be “owned” by a particular administrative body. In the example of PULSE, this body was the Council of Undergraduate Deans. When asked whether it would be possible for a climate survey of graduate students to be included, Rev. Gipson suggested that the Subcommittee contact the graduate school deans.

e. We recommend that the Administration dedicate a specific survey to the effort of assessing campus climate. The timeline of PULSE was such that members of the Campus Climate Subcommittee were unable to offer any additional suggestions. During the Diversity and Equity Committee meeting on February 19, 2009, members further emphasized that the Administration did not ask for input on PULSE during the critical time of content creation. It was pointed out that such a lack of ongoing dialogue creates a troubling precedent since greater input from more campus constituencies may have further honed PULSE questions, potentially making them even more useful to the Penn community.

f. We recommend that the Administration allow for a greater degree of transparency in the creation of survey content.

g. We recommend that the Administration include qualitative methodological efforts at assessing campus climate, such as through focus groups, to complement survey data. We discussed the possibility of deputizing Penn faculty with such expertise to spearhead this effort, even enlisting their graduate students to help accomplish the goal. One question that came up in our discussion had to do with the rights to such data. It seems that the University should retain exclusive rights to the data and its dissemination. Therefore, faculty and graduate students might need other incentives to take part in such a project if they may not be able to publish their findings in traditional ways.

h. We recommend that the Administration begin substantive deliberation with the graduate school deans on the implementation of an instrument to assess the level of comfort and beliefs about the acceptance of difference found among graduate students.

3. Continue to work with the Office of the Provost on a Diversity Webpage

Since this subcommittee’s initial meeting with representatives from the Provost’s office last academic year, the Provost’s website was redeveloped. The Provost’s page now links to a diversity page which expresses the University’s commitment to diversity, a commitment that extends to every aspect of its academic, cultural, and campus life. While various schools, departments and programs have all demonstrated commitment to diversity via individual web pages, the University would be more effectively served by the development of a resource which links these separate sites, further promoting the University’s strong commitment to diversity.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

a. One aspect of our charge entailed coming up with a list of Penn units with websites that merit linkage to such a site. We came up with a list of 37 units. (See Appendix, www.upenn.edu/secretary/council/DiversityEquityReport08-09appendix.pdf)

b. We also recommend that each School create a specific Diversity link on its homepage. A couple have already produced sites, and they should be linked to the main diversity website. The others should be asked to create their own Diversity sites ASAP, and they should be hyperlinked with the main site as soon as they are operational.

c. On Thursday, March 5, the Diversity & Equity Website sub-committee met with Mr. Nelson to gain input from the Provost’s Office. As a result of a lengthy discussion of diversity pages on notable university websites of peer institutions, we consider Cornell University’s approach one of the best models—and for various reasons:

(continued on next page)
Committee on Diversity and Equity

(continued from page 5)

• Prominent Diversity and Inclusiveness link from Cornell’s homepage.
• Commitment to Diversity Statement at the top of the page
• University’s diversity goals are clearly enumerated
• History, Policies and Reports link
• Link to University’s Diversity offices and campus organizations
• How are We Doing? link to Cornell’s climate survey
• Featured Programs
• News Announcements
• Link to courses which focus on issues of diversity
• Ability to report bias incidents and to send comments via diversity page
d. The committee has been most concerned with helping to determine
which University entity should take financial and administrative responsibility
for this project. It was suggested that we gain input and seek guidance from
the President’s Office. Joann Mitchell has provided such guidance in the past,
and we added a discussion with the University Communications Department
this spring. On March 18, Aiasha Graham, representing the Diversity & Equi-

ty Website sub-committee, met with Lori Doyle, VP University Communications
and Deni Kasrel, director Web and Publishing Services, to discuss (i) the
feasibility of a diversity link from the University home page, (ii) the consid-
eration of content, and (iii) questions about which University entity should
be responsible for development and maintenance.

(i) Direct Link from the University Home Page:
While initially problematic due to the finite number of tabs available,
a direct link may still be achieved by placing a link just below the “About
Penn” header on the left side of the page.

(ii) Consideration for Content:
There was a general consensus on the following items for content:
- President’s Message
- Links to School Diversity sites
- News & Events
- History, Policies, Statements
- Links to University Diversity Offices
- Links to Diversity Programs or Courses
- Special Initiatives
- Resources and Training
- Equal Opportunity Links
- Reports and Statistics -Link to Institutional Research and Analysis page
- Portals for Students, Faculty, Staff?

(iii) Responsibility for development, maintenance and content.
The following suggestions were given by University Communications:
1) University Communications would agree to build the site using the Uni-
versity template, but does not have the staff to develop content or manage.
The responsible office would have to invest in a staff member with the ability to
write web code for updating the content as well as the ability to collect content
from various constituencies.
2) The responsible office could invest in a content management system.
Deni Kasrel may be able to identify an appropriate system and provide costs.
The ball park figure is somewhere between $10,000 and $20,000. If the sys-
tem were built using a Content Management System, University Communi-
cations may be willing to have one of their press officers update the content.
See: Research at Penn Site (maintained by University Communications)
3) The responsible office should probably fall under the Office of Institu-
tional Affairs. However, does it have staff or budget to commit to establishing
the University’s diversity page?
e. We recommend that the University consider having the Office of Div-
ersity and Equity oversee all elements of the website. The University might also
think about this website as one of the direct responsibilities of the Office of Af-
firmative Action & Equal Opportunity.

Diversity Website Subcommittee Members:
Aiasha Graham, convener
Esther Agbaje
Thomas Chester
Nicole Maloy

4. Explore implementation of (and compliance with) the Uni-
versity’s gender identity (non-discrimination) policy
The University added “gender identity” to its non-discrimination policy in 2004, but appears not to be in compliance with that policy in some areas.
The Gender Identity Subcommittee met four times during the academic year.
The Subcommittee took direct actions related to some identified problem ar-
eas and made recommendations regarding unresolved problem areas.

Direct Actions:
1. Ensured that University personnel working in student housing, including
GAs and RAs, will be educated about transgender issues during summer pre-
service training through the inclusion of relevant case materials.
2. Arranged for in-service training sessions to take place in Student Health Services,
Office of Health Education, and Counseling and Psychological Services
(CAPS).
3. Surveyed other colleges and universities to assess what kinds of cov-
erage is being provided in their health insurances for hormone replacement,
gender reassignment surgeries, and other procedures needed by transgender
individuals.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

a. We recommend that a list of all campus gender-non-specific restrooms
be published on Penn’s website.
b. We recommend that the Administration provide more publicity around
gender-neutral housing options, including for entering first-year undergradu-
ate students.
c. We recommend that the Administration address the inequity of some stu-
dents being forced to pay supplements for single rooms they do not necessar-
ily require or even prefer.
d. We recommend that Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity
evaluate the effectiveness of the CHAS gender-neutral housing policy, in-
cluding 1) how effectively the policy is being communicated to students, 2)
how students feel about gender-neutral housing, and 3) whether there are un-
due burdens for students opting for gender-neutral housing.
e. We recommend that all University forms inquiring about gender offer
broader options than a “male/female” binary. Forms should also indicate “Par-
ent 1 and Parent 2” or “Caregivers.”
f. As many campus gender-identity concerns are monitored by OAA/EO,
we recommend that an Executive Director (position vacant since December
2007) be hired as soon as possible.
g. We recommend that all transgender health care (including hormone ther-
apy and sex reassignment surgery) be covered under student health insurance
and faculty/staff health insurance options.
h. We recommend that private, individual-use shower and changing rooms
be installed in all existing, renovated, and new athletic facilities and that they
be clearly marked as such.
i. We recommend that gender and sexual diversity sensitivity training
should be provided to all athletic coaches.

Gender Identity Subcommittee Members
Robert Schoenber, convener
Valerie Allen
Erik Hsu
Matty Lehman
Kevin Runak
Riley Snorton
Michelle Wells Lockett
Dennie Zastrow

Specific Charges for next year:
1. Work with Deans to promote the expeditious mounting of diversity links
on each School’s homepage.
2. Identify Penn faculty with the expertise to develop qualitative methods
for helping to further assess campus climate and determine how some peer in-
stitutions have used faculty on similar assessment projects.
3. Develop a feasible way of organizing a small university-wide postdoc-
toral fellowship program for newly minted PhDs that is tethered to diversity-
related (broadly conceived) academic research.
4. Work on continuing to monitor the implementation of gender-neutral
campus policies.

Committee on Diversity and Equity Members 2008-2009
Chair: John Jackson (Annenberg/SAS); Staff Member: Brenda Brand
(Secretary’s Office); Faculty: Lisa Lewis (Nursing), Yvonne Paterson
(Medicine), Andres Pinto (Dental), Jorge Santiago-Aviles (SEAS), Yolan-
da Slaughter (Dental), Howard Stevenson (GSE), Nancy Tkacs (Nursing);
Graduate Students: Esther Agbaje (Fels), Christa Heyward (Medicine);
Undergraduate Students: Ben Alisuag (SAS), Dennie Zastrow (Whar-
ton); Staff: Aiasha B. Saalim Graham (Publications Services), Lisa Linn
de Barona (Wharton), Omua Alonkhai (Medicine), Michelle Wells Lock-
ett (Medicine).
Committee on Facilities

This report is divided into four sections. The first section addresses each of the specific charges given to the 2008-2009 committee. The second lists issues that might be given attention by the 2009-2010 committee. The third contains some comments about the operation of the committee and makes some suggestions that might improve its effectiveness. The concluding section summarizes the committee’s recommendations.

Section I: Specific Charges to the 2008-2009 Committee

A. In consultation with the working group chaired by Marie Witt, Maureen Rush, and Kevin Mahoney, review plans for dealing with the problems associated with the closing of the South Street Bridge, including the use of alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles.

Reviewing plans in conjunction with the working group would have provided an unnecessary—and probably unproductive—additional complication to what was already a difficult process. We have instead looked at the effects of the closing and considered possible ways to ease those problems which have arisen. Although there have been many problems with the closing of the South Street Bridge they have not, at least to date, been as severe as many of us had feared. While this may be due as much to good luck as to careful planning, those involved in the planning surely deserve commendation.

The closing of the Bridge has had an impact on vehicle traffic, on green space and on bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Since the latter two are subjects of two of our other charges, this report considers effects of the bridge closure on those areas in sections devoted specifically to green space (C) and to bicycle and pedestrian safety (D).

The South Street Bridge provided one of the main routes for traffic between Center City and University City. It also provided one of the routes between the Schuylkill Expressway and University City. While the ramps between the Bridge and the Expressway were fundamentally flawed, many motorists used those ramps in spite of their flaws. Traffic on alternate routes has increased since the bridge has closed, and is often miserable during rush hours—especially in the evening. The increase in traffic problems, however, appears to be mostly one of degree rather than one of scale. Unfortunately, the Expressway could not handle rush hour traffic conveniently before the bridge was closed, and delays and generally sluggish conditions were not unusual. The current conditions would probably be even worse if the downturn of the economy had not postponed much of the planned construction east of 30th Street on Chestnut and Walnut Streets.

Ronald Ward reports that the service on Penn Transit has been somewhat slowed, but sliding delays have generally not been observed. A particular problem for Penn Transit is evening traffic on Chestnut Street, which is hampered by construction, short-term parking in front of the new retail post office, and the jam of vehicles turning either north or south on Schuylkill Avenue to reach the Expressway ramps. The jam of traffic at this location and the construction is not a new phenomenon, but the vehicles waiting for short-term parking at the new retail post office have added an unnecessary new obstacle to smooth traffic flow.

North-south traffic through the campus, although heavier, does not appear to be subject to markedly more serious problems than previously. The good news is that traffic, although worse than prior to the closure of the bridge, is still bearable. The bad news is that there is nothing obvious that can be done to improve the flow of traffic. Worse yet, the construction underway on Civic Center Boulevard and that planned between Chestnut Street and Walnut Street will almost certainly mean that traffic will never return to its pre-closure levels.

The most serious problem associated with the closing of the bridge may be the increased danger experienced by bicyclists. This is explored in more detail in Section D.

B. Examine the building plans for the East Campus extension and address the needs of all potential users.

The current financial situation has led to a significant reduction in the pace of planned construction. This pause provides an opportunity to look in an unhurried fashion at the needs on campus. We assumed that the needs of specific schools are being effectively presented by the deans of those schools. We decided to focus our effort on those groups that might have University-wide perspectives. To this end we have solicited input from each of the five constituencies that are represented on University Council. Since we got a rather late start on this effort we plan to spend most of our April meeting on the responses we have received, and will issue, if appropriate, an update to this report.

C. Study the current availability of green space on campus with a goal of providing a benchmark against which future plans could be compared.

A subcommittee was specifically assigned to examine this issue and report back to main committee on their findings this year. The committee as a whole met with Mark Kocent, who gave detailed explanations of the University’s plans for green space in its development plans with particular details given about Penn Connects and the development of the postal lands. In addition, the subcommittee met with members of the Department of Recreation with the goal of both obtaining information and also looking at specific needs of the department regarding green space and open playing green-space.

The green space on campus comes in many forms, and a simple listing of the total area does not give very much useful information. The value of those spaces ranges from simple visual pleasure to formal arenas for intercollegiate athletics. There is an expected and planned increase of 21.5% in the total green-space on campus over the time period from 2005 to 2010. The majority of this increase in open playing green space will occur due to development of two large recreational fields in the Penn Park project. The current plan calls for artificial turf to be used as their base material for the fields leading to improved maintenance and usage.

Unfortunately the total green space on campus has been significantly reduced by the South Street Bridge reconstruction. The formerly-open fields immediately north and south of the bridge are now devoted to staging areas for the Bridge. Bower Field, now used by the Department of Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics, will be closed this summer to permit work to begin on Penn Park. In these circumstances it is essential that all other areas be preserved and utilized as effectively as possible to compensate for these losses. Hill Field, Highline Park, and the open areas near the highrise residences should all be programmed for fuller use in the interval before Penn Park is completed. The committee recommends that the Department of Recreation be given increased access to these fields so that intramural athletic programs can continue during this time period. It will also be important that a high level of maintenance be continued on these fields so that they remain playable during this period.

The completion of Penn Park, coupled with the return and restoration of the fields currently devoted to the South Street Bridge reconstruction, will make a very positive impact on overall green space. It will be important, since this space is somewhat remote from the center of campus, to make it as attractive and as flexible as possible. It is possible that one or two open pavilions would draw more people. These structures would serve several purposes including the protection against inclement weather and could be used for both scheduled and non-scheduled social activities. It is also important, in future years, that the green space of Penn Park and the remaining open playing green space in the western campus not be whittled away by the construction of new buildings.

D. Examine and evaluate issues pertaining to pedestrian and bicycle traffic on campus, including frequent sidewalk closures due to construction projects and the use of bicycles on pedestrian walkways.

1) Pedestrians

In spite of the rather cavalier treatment of crosswalks and traffic lights by Pennsylvania motorists and the general disregard for “don’t walk” signals by Pennsylvanians pedestrians, vehicles and pedestrians appear to have found an uneasy but tolerable coexistence around the campus. The mid-block green-space on 35th Street and 36th Street is generally more life-threatening than before the closure of the South Street Bridge. The primary effect of the bridge closure on this relatively benign situation is the closure of the South Street entrance and exit to the University City SEPTA station. All riders must now leave and enter the station at mid-block on Convention Avenue. During the morning rush hour the simultaneous arrival of two trains results in hundreds of pedestrians crossing Convention Avenue within a period of a few minutes. Until recently, in spite of signs for bidding the practice, almost all pedestrians did cross at mid-block — in part (continued on next page)
Section II. Issues for Next Year’s Committee

General-use facilities: The investigation of general-use, as opposed to specific school use, facilities should be continued. Fortunately, the depressed state of the economy provides an opportunity for a careful look at this issue.

Bicycle Safety: It is frustrating to recognize the dangers that bicyclists face while riding to and from campus and to realize, at the same time, that the problems may be nearly unsolvable. The committee should keep looking for solutions.

Penn Park: As the Penn Park evolves the committee should continue to monitor the extent and use of green space on campus.

Facility Renewal: Many members of the committee expressed concern about both the apparent neglect of some buildings on campus and the apparently high costs of renewal that is done. The committee should better understand the limitations on facilities renewal and new construction.

Section III: Suggestions

During the 2007-2008 year the chair of the committee attempted to find a mutually-convenient time for members for each meeting. In spite of his efforts he clearly failed, since attendance was generally sparse. In 2008-2009 the meeting time was set before the committee was commissioned, on the assumption that those prospective members for whom the time was inconvenient would be dissuaded from joining the committee. This change produced even worse attendance.

Perhaps some combination of the two approaches might be better than either one. Since many of the members of the current committee may continue on next year’s committee we will look for a better approach before we adjourn for the summer.

Although we had hoped to begin meeting promptly at the beginning of the school year, the process of charging the committee and completing its membership delayed the first meeting to mid-October. The requirement that a report be prepared by April 1 limits the effective time for the committee’s deliberations to little more than five months—with a long break in late December and early January. It might be reasonable to attempt to have the 2009-2010 committee begin to meet in April. At this meeting the members might begin to look over the subjects to be addressed. Much work could be done—and perhaps some progress could be made—via e-mail over the summer. The committee could then have a running start in early September.

Section IV: Summary of Recommendations

A. Eliminate vehicles stopping or parking in bicycle lanes.
B. Consider pedestrian traffic across Convention Avenue opposite SEPTA station.
C. Increase utilization of existing green space during period of reconstruction of South Street Bridge and construction of Penn Park.
D. Enforce prohibition of bicycle traffic on sidewalks and campus walks with high pedestrian traffic.
E. See that some agency clears snow from sidewalks on Chestnut Street and Walnut Street bridges.

Committee on Facilities Members 2008-2009

Chair: Walter Wales (SAS); Faculty: Eugene Birch (Design), William Braham (Design), Thomas Daniels (Design), Michael McGarvey (Medicine), Bernard Shapiro (Veterinary Medicine), Richard Shlansky-Goldberg (Medicine), Susan Weiss (Medicine); Graduate Students: James Bennett (Design), Nikki Thorpe (Design); Undergraduate Students: Elyse Sholk (Wharton), Lisa Zhu (College); Staff: Laura Foltman (GSE), Stephanie Grant (Annenberg), Mary Jones-Parker (Presbyterian Hospital), Karima Williams (Law).

Committee on Facilities (continued from page 7)

because doing so is by far the most convenient way to reach their destinations, and in part because the alternate route recommended was frequently blocked for construction. A pedestrian crosswalk has now been installed at this location, and most of the SEPTA passengers use it.

Additional crosswalks and traffic signals have recently been installed in this area to accommodate the new traffic patterns around the medical complexes. It is as yet too early to judge how effective these changes will be. Since those traffic patterns may result in more vehicle traffic on Convention Avenue, it is important to assess, in the next few months, whether the new signals and crosswalks provide adequate safety for pedestrian safety.

One of the concerns expressed to the committee is the slow removal of snow from the Chestnut Street and Walnut Street bridges across the Schuylkill River. The number of pedestrians who now use these bridges is very large, and a slip on ice can easily cause an unlucky pedestrian to fall into the nearest lane of heavy traffic. This problem should be addressed either by the City of Philadelphia or by the University.

2) Bicycles

Bicyclists have not found a reasonable coexistence, either with motorists or with pedestrians. Bicyclists are menaced by motorists and bicyclists in turn menace pedestrians. Neither the public streets nor the campus itself was designed with the needs of bicyclists in mind, and the efforts to retrofit do not appear to have been very successful.

The closure of the South Street Bridge forced most of the 1700 bicyclists who accessed campus daily from Center City to use Chestnut Street and Walnut Street. During the evening rush hour bicyclists on Chestnut Street must navigate an obstacle course. Some motorists waiting for the short-term parking in front of the post office are almost always double-parked in the bicycle lane, forcing riders into the lane of vehicles whose drivers are changing lanes for the same reason. The bicycle lane moves riders from the curb lane to between two lanes of moving traffic just before the jam of vehicles attempting to turn onto Schuylkill Avenue and hence to the Expressway. Many evening riders use Walnut Street as an alternate, either riding on the sidewalk in competition with many pedestrians or riding in the wrong direction in the bicycle lane.

Barring an effective—and extremely unlikely—redesign of both local streets and the campus, it appears that some improvement might be achieved by:

a) Enforcing the prohibition on vehicles stopping or parking in bicycle lanes. In those locations where the University has control of the buildings, the University should forbid vendors from parking in bicycle lanes. The University should encourage the City of Philadelphia to take action in other areas. The short-term parking in front of the retail post office is apparently high costs of renewal that is done. The committee should better understand the limitations on facilities renewal and new construction.

b) Improve behavior of bicyclists on and near campus—Bicyclists should not be allowed to ride on crowded sidewalks, they should be forbidden from riding on campus during peak pedestrian hours, and they should be cited for ignoring traffic signals. This will require that bicyclists become more accustomed to walking with their bicycles, and develop more patience with traffic signals. In the longer run, perhaps some very creative student of effective land use might devise a way to provide alternate routes for bicycles across campus.

One last note on this issue: In view of the danger of bicycling on many of the streets around the University it seems almost irresponsible to encourage more people to use bicycles to get to work.