Committee on Academic and Related Affairs

General Committee Charge
(i) shall have cognizance over matters of recruitment, admissions, and financial aid that concern the University as a whole and that are not the specific responsibility of individual faculties, including the authority to carry out studies on existing recruitment and admissions procedures and their relationship with existing policies on admission and financial aid, and to recommend changes in policy to the Council; (09-10) (07-08) (06-07)
(ii) shall consider the purposes of a University bookstore and advise the Council and the management of the University bookstore on policies, development, and operations; (06-07)
(iii) shall review and monitor issues related to the international programs and other international activities of the University, including advice and policy recommendations in such areas as services for international students and scholars, foreign fellowships and studies abroad, faculty, staff and student exchange programs, and cooperative undertakings with foreign universities; (09-10) (08-09) (07-08)
(iv) shall advise the vice provost and director of libraries on the policies, development, and operation of the University libraries; (09-10) (08-09) (06-07)
(v) shall have cognizance over recreation and intramural and intercollegiate athletics and their integration with the educational program of the University, including the planning and provision of adequate facilities for various sports and recreation programs; (07-08) (06-07)
(vi) shall have cognizance of all matters of policy relating to research and the general environment for research at the University, including the assignment and distribution of indirect costs and the assignment of those research funds distributed by the University, and shall advise the administration on those proposals for sponsored research referred to it because of potential conflict with University policy.

2009-10 Specific Charges
1. Consider and discuss new admissions programs with Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Eric Furdia, including Penn’s recent partnership with the Posse Foundation, and the implementation of new technologies to expand student outreach.
2. Discuss issues associated with podcasting including the adequacy of current facilities, and consider the formulation of best practices.
3. Consider how decisions are made concerning the health and safety of students and faculty engaged in overseas programs.
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 AY 2010-2011.

Podcasting
The Committee met on November 9, 2009 in the Weigle Information Commons (WIC) to address the specific charge:
Discuss issues associated with podcasting, including the adequacy of current facilities, and consider the formulation of best practices.

The guest participants were:
Anu Vedantham, director, Weigle Information Commons (WIC); Podcasting Demonstration and Training Overview
Gates Rhodes, director, Penn Video Network; iTunesU, YouTube, and campus-wide coordination
John MacDermott, director of Instructional Technology, SAS; Integration Into Course Activities

There was an impressive graphical presentation in the WIC, almost all of which involved discussion of video presentations in one form or another at an institutional level. It was noted that a number of institutions post material on iTunesU, notably MIT. The value of University-level productions for publicity purposes was acknowledged. There was some classroom-related discussion, for example, regarding the prospect of recording lectures on a routine basis. Despite the enthusiasm among the presenters for expanding information dissemination, it emerged that recording academic presentations, in particular course work, is not widely adopted on campus.

According to Wikipedia, “A podcast is a series of digital media files (either audio or video) that are released episodically and often downloaded through web syndication.” Other reference sources tend to limit the definition to audio only. Apart from the Medical School, there seem to be few instances where Penn personnel engage in “podcasting.” in the sense of systematic recording and posting of academic content. Facilities for recording lectures at an audio or video level do exist elsewhere on campus, such as in Wharton, although as far as the Committee could determine, even where the facilities are in place (again excepting the Medical School) they do not appear to be used programmatically to any great extent. It was recognized that Blackboard has been broadly adopted by faculty, staff and students on the Penn campus, as a medium for posting lecture material, including slides and videos, although the mode of usage, interactivity, etc. vary substantially.

Audio recordings of lectures in some disciplines are made both at a department level and also informally by students. Replaying audio recordings is straightforward on iPods and similar devices, and is routinely used by students in some areas. On the other hand, the audio-only approach is likely to be of limited use in a science and engineering context, and in other areas where spoken lectures require visual reinforcement. Some visual aids would commonly involve slide presentations and chalkboard illustration, but also some videos and bench top demonstrations.

From a technical perspective, a fixed-camera approach for video recording of lectures is likely to be of limited use, considering the need to focus on a mobile lecturer and to highlight different points of interest on chalkboards ranging over a wide area at the front of a large lecture room. For example, a typical large Chemistry lecture (120 students) will fill several large chalkboards, several times over during a lecture, often supported by PowerPoint slides. Sometimes the interest will focus on a small-scale demonstration (where one can definitely argue for the need for video capture) and other times, the discussion will shift to questions from the auditorium. The argument can therefore be made that adequate video coverage requires multiple cameras and microphones. The difference in resource overhead (including technical personnel) between the audio and video approaches is considerable to the point that many departments are likely unwilling to consider the resource commitment. Certainly, this seems to have been the case so far.

One may also consider the following points of view. Presumably, the University wants to encourage the maximum amount of faculty-student interaction during lectures. Random comments, or responses during Q&A may take on a different significance if the proceedings are being archived; the presence of one or more cameras or microphones could well constrain the interaction. Academic freedom and student confidentiality concerns also need to be considered; it is already difficult to have students ask questions in a large lecture class. On the other hand, it is just those types of unscripted questions and responses that often distinguish a presentation, and which would not be captured in any other way. “Exactly how did the professor respond to that question that I didn’t properly hear?” “What was the question that prompted a particular response on the chalkboard?” Also, it is likely that many faculty would simply prefer their lectures, as far as possible, to be “off the record,” which is the status quo for the most part. It is worth noting that many academic professional meetings (e.g. Gordon Research Conferences) are deliberately not archived, in order to allow the uninhibited exchange of ideas.

Some locations (e.g., Wharton, Medical School) are currently equipped for routine video recording of lectures, although it seems that the Medical School is the only place where recordings are routinely made. On the other hand, even there, the extent to which this material is routinely accessed after the fact was not clear from Committee discussions. In the Wharton School, we understand that the recordings are made at the discretion of individual faculty members, although here it was not clear how many people routinely use the service. Anecdotally, we heard about cases of covering religious holidays—for students who missed class—but no other routine use.

Students already sometimes generate their own (limited) video recordings of lectures through laptops, although from personal observation, this appears to be a small minority at present, and the quality of such recordings from webcams cannot be that high. It seems clear that many students would appreciate the ability to review lecture presentations on-line, after the fact. On the other hand, one needs to weigh this possibility against the likely drop in attendance at lectures, unless additional incentives (e.g., clickers) are supplied for attending class. Certainly, the pre-posting of PowerPoint material on Blackboard can suppress lecture attendance.

Our understanding is that most lecture rooms are equipped with contemporary computer projection devices, and lecturers can conveniently make-up, so that audio recording is relatively trivial. Audio recording has

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been used effectively, such as in the case of students with hearing difficulties or other situations, in conjunction with Student Disabilities Services. Yet, our impression is that only a small percentage of lectures are in fact recorded, even at the audio-only level. It seems a logical course of action at this point to determine the likely demand among faculty/students for regular recording of lectures in either audio or video format.

As a side comment here, there is also a good case to be made for spending additional resources on effective tutoring and other one-on-one contacts between students and instructional personnel. This could help students at all levels of ability in a way that simply recording lectures would not.

There remains also the question in the minds of Committee members about the effectiveness of “podcasting” per se as a general technique for dissemination of information. Although file formats remain relatively standard, the display technology, memory storage, etc. are constantly evolving. Also, as noted above, existing content-rich, cross-platform, interactive resources such as Blackboard are being effectively used in a variety of different ways by faculty in different disciplines. It would probably be a good idea to review the innovative ways in which Blackboard is being used by the University community.

It seems clear that, if the University wishes to move in the direction of recording lectures on a more routine basis, faculty members need to be convinced of its value. Despite available resources, recording of lectures is not widespread in the University community. Moreover, a number of departments for whom this opportunity exists presumably view the cost to be a major deterrent, considering all the other demands on department budgets. The idea of depositing archives of lectures, etc., on a central, external repository such as iTunesU, was met with some skepticism by the Committee. Some faculty have expressed opposition to posting such material outside Penn. Issues such as academic freedom, intellectual property rights, other copyright issues, and the idea of “providing a free education” were all raised. Certainly, some outreach was considered highly desirable from the point of view of visibility of the University (e.g., MIT has some prominence in iTunesU, why not Penn?), but here it is likely that a more professional level of production would be needed. Certainly, this would not apply to the routine case.

Another issue was raised about the production of videos of laboratory and other technical demonstrations. One could certainly argue that there is a need to replace this ad hoc system and, for the greatest effectiveness, a centralized, professional level of production seems optimal. Some video productions of lecture demonstrations are available on the Internet. Although some of the Internet versions are quite useful, these clearly cannot address more than a fraction of local requirements, and it seems that there is a need to produce some of these types of videos locally. These could then be posted, as on Blackboard, as needed.

One of the more lasting recollections from Committee discussions on the issue of recording lectures is that some members were impressed that lectures in many departments are actually supported by computers. Apparently, the classroom technology that some departments take for granted is not uniformly available. Whatever the reason, it seems that a high priority should be placed on bringing all departments up to a similar level of classroom technology. Internet access from the classroom and the ability to project electronic materials has to be considered a minimum requirement of education in the modern era.

Recommendations

1. Dissemination of ideas to the faculty of the capabilities of Blackboard, supplemented with anecdotal information, could be a relatively inexpensive way to improve the effectiveness of this valuable resource. The Committee recommends that further efforts be made to popularize Blackboard, and that there be an additional effort to disseminate ideas to faculty, staff and students about how this valuable facility could be optimally used.

2. It is clear that not all classrooms are equipped with either basic projection facilities or Internet access. Such limitations, which can restrict academic curricula, should be addressed as soon as possible. The Committee strongly recommends that classroom facilities campus-wide be brought to a similar level of technology.

3. The Committee proposes that, if the University wishes to advance the cause of internal “podcasting,” a small number of courses be selected on a trial basis outside the Medical and Wharton Schools, to examine the pedagogical value and financial viability of such a program. Most important, faculty members need to be convinced of its value.

COUNCIL  2009-2010 Year-End Reports

International Programs

The Committee met on January 25, 2010 to address the specific agenda item:

Consider how decisions are made concerning the health and safety of students and faculty engaged in overseas programs.

The guest presenter was Anne Waters, executive director, Office of International Programs (OIP). Erika Gross, associate director, Office of International Programs, was also in attendance.

This excellent, informative presentation supported by a set of Power Point slides designed to anticipate many Committee questions, gave an extensive analysis of the purview of OIP. Some of the essential components are transcribed below:

1. Services and support to international students, scholars and their families who apply for US visas for work or study
2. Partner with departments and admissions offices in schools to support international recruiting efforts
3. Administer Penn Abroad programs and services to undergraduates; ensure programs meet current curricular goals and requirements
4. Build greater alignment between faculty international research activities and study abroad opportunities
5. Expand international internships by leveraging existing partnerships (e.g., India, Botswana, China) and identifying new organizations
6. Develop service learning programs to enrich student international experiences and provide pre-professional work experiences
7. Support faculty international research projects
8. Consult with School and University administrators to develop risk management guidelines for Penn-sponsored international programs
9. Provide pre-departure orientation/training for international program leaders and students

For information, Penn ranks fourth in the nation in the percentage of international students of all kinds (19%).

Penn Abroad involves approved programs at universities in other countries for semester or full-year, regarded as equivalent to Penn standards; students earn Penn credit. There is some emphasis on cultural immersion, where 40% of the courses are in taught in local languages (presumably not including English). There is a range of programs for languages less commonly taught (at Penn), including Arabic, Chinese and Japanese. Exchange programs permit direct enrollment at partner universities; classes are with local students and local faculty.

Penn now sponsors a wide range of innovative, school-specific international programs, including: global medical education, international design seminars (e.g., landscape architecture in Mumbai), Wharton’s Global Consulting Practicum, faculty-led field trips linked to specific courses, summer or semester-break study trips and internships or service learning opportunities.

The Penn community can call upon I-SOS, an international risk management service, for assistance in a crisis. Penn students, faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to register with I-SOS prior to departure. Compliance ranges from ~100% for undergraduate programs such as Penn Abroad, to much smaller numbers when faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral associates are considered.

Penn’s membership in I-SOS provides all members of Penn community (students, faculty, staff) with assistance while traveling abroad: pre-departure travel advice, centralized tracking of travel itineraries, global intelligence network for safety and security risk assessment, guidance and referrals for local medical services while abroad, emergency evacuation services for medical treatment and emergency evacuation in cases of civil unrest.

OIP proposes a structured approach to consult with Penn’s academic and administrative leaders to assess programs in high-risk locations or under other potentially dangerous conditions. Decisions will be guided by these priorities:

1. Health, safety and security of students, faculty, and staff (with specific attention to safety of undergraduates)
2. Academic progress for students or faculty research effort
3. What would be the impact on students/faculty/staff if the program were to be interrupted?
4. What would be the impact of deferring an international program to subsequent semester?
5. Long-term viability of the academic exchange and ongoing research collaboration

OIP risk assessment is guided by a range of travel advisories and consultation with Penn experts.

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Recommendations of the Committee for Future Business

1. The Committee felt as a whole that, while some useful conclusions can be reached by a non-specialist committee, considerably greater benefit could be obtained through the use of more focused subcommittees, each of which would deal with a particular agenda item. It was felt that such sub-committees would be more effective if they incorporated ex-officio members from the relevant responsibility areas (e.g., Admissions, Athletics, Library, Classroom Technology), who would attend regular meetings, to provide authoritative input for committee deliberations. In particular, reviewing the general charge of the Committee, it is unclear why the areas: (v) relating to “athletics and their integration with the educational program of the University” and (vi) relating to the “general environment for research at the University, including the assignment and distribution of indirect costs and the assignment of those research funds distributed by the University environment,” fall under the purview of the Committee as currently constituted. It seems that these areas would be ideal candidates for specialized committees, including appointed experts.

2. From experience in the current year, we recommend that the issue of admissions practices, outreach, technology and longer-term strategies be examined by a more focused committee. One particular area of interest for future study should be to consider the effect of Early Admissions policies on the makeup of the incoming class.

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. Review the quality of the University experience for students, faculty and staff concerning recent committee areas of interest including: public safety, graduate housing, and the provision of mental health services. Consider making appropriate recommendations.

2. Continue to assess the interaction of the Penn community and the broader community. Assume that the University is taking appropriate steps to further positive interaction, recognizing that the implications of current economic conditions may both create greater needs and constrain University actions.

3. Investigate particular needs of students with families, including child care, family housing, and other facility issues, to assure student needs are addressed.

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 AY 2010-2011.

There was excellent attendance and engagement at committee meetings from faculty and staff representatives; graduate and undergraduate representatives were appointed late in the year and did not attend all meetings.

Activities

1. Graduate Student Housing—The Committee met with Doug Berger and Ed Datz, and received comments from representatives of GAPSAP. Anita Mastroieni, director of the Graduate Student Center, submitted written comments suggesting that Penn could benefit from more on-campus housing for graduate students. To the Committee’s surprise, the GAPSAP representatives reported that the quantity of on-campus housing is not a problem; rather, the representatives reported concerns regarding the quality of on-campus housing. GAPSAP representatives reported that this includes married students and students with children. Housing confirmed that most graduate students do find housing within a short period of arriving on campus. The Committee recommends continued attention but no longer feels that this is an issue of immediate concern.

2. Other Housing Issues—Both Housing and Conferences Services and Facilities and Real Estate reported that the construction of the Radian, Domus and the Hub have affected student residential patterns in ways that benefit Penn and the broader community, and also reported that they have not adversely affected the College Houses. Also, while graduate housing did not present the issues that the Committee anticipated, reports from Faculty and Housing did raise two issues of concern. (1) Short-Term Housing—There is a dearth of affordable and easily-accessed short-term housing on or near campus. Penn is making a concerted and admirable effort to reach out to persons from countries or institutions that are not well-funded. The Committee foresaw possible problems as Penn continues to reach out to a diverse range of partners, and suggests that attention be paid to this issue. (2) Some faculty reported problems in recruiting doctoral candidates because they could not provide information regarding housing. Housing and Conferences Services reported that they surveyed department chairs and heard of no concerns.

3. Dining Services—The Committee met with Laurie Cousart and representatives of Bon Appétit. The Committee was deeply impressed by Bon Appétit’s commitment to both quality dining and to integrating dining into the Penn community. The Committee noted that many dozens of food sources compete with dining, many of which are placed on or near campus by Penn; it was not clear to the Committee what the overall plan is regarding dining. The Committee notes that Housing and Conference Services has put together a committee to clarify the role of dining within Penn’s overall mission, and looks forward to the report of that committee. The Committee also hopes that the University can facilitate community-enhancing practices such as student employment within the dining system.

4. Counseling and Psychological Services—The Committee once again was impressed by and grateful for the services of Counseling and Psychological Services. The Committee paid particular attention to service—
to international students. CAPS did report one issue that merits further review: the extent to which the compensation offered by Penn allows or inhibits Penn to attract candidates for positions within the system.

5. Bicycles on Campus—The Committee is aware that in general this issue falls within the jurisdiction of another committee, and limited its consideration with Mark Kocent to how proposed policies for bicycles might affect the quality of life on campus and might affect relationships with the community. The liveliness of the debate within the Committee suggests that these policies could generate strong reactions in Penn and in the community; the Committee looks forward to further discussions on this matter.

6. Cultural Centers—The Committee had a very fruitful discussion with Karlene Burrell-McRae, June Chu, America Espinal, Felicity Paxton, and Bob Schoenberg, directors of cultural centers at our University. The Committee was deeply impressed by the degree to which the cultural centers contribute to the quality of life at Penn and to the extent to which they act as bridges between Penn and the broader community. Cultural centers provide critical support to individual students and are deeply integrated into the support network at Penn. Individual directors have established close relationships with academic divisions; it might be useful to develop more institutionalized relationships. The directors identified the following groups of students as those who might not be supported as well as they should be: transgender students, LPS students, non-traditional students, post-bac students, and graduate students. The Committee concluded the following: (1) As Penn’s community includes a greater number of non-traditional students it should evaluate the extent to which it provides support for these students. (2) The University should audit the extent to which its buildings conform to the needs of transgender members of our community. (3) The directors reported a need for information on the climate of the University; the PULSE survey and other climate surveys may be of assistance.

7. Faith-Based Organizations—The Committee met with Charles Howard, Beverly Dale, Susanne Flood, Jeff Klein, Tony Liang and Ephram Lubin, directors of religious centers at Penn. As with the cultural centers, the Committee was deeply impressed by the contributions of these centers. These Centers provide a great deal of support to individual students, and contribute to the texture of life at Penn. The centers also educate the broader community about different cultures and faiths. These contributions are made in the context of a secular university that embraces numerous viewpoints. The directors suggested several ways that their contributions could be made even greater: (1) It is sometimes difficult for the centers to obtain timely information about the University. (2) Religious or faith could be made part of the discussion about diversity in our university. (3) Knowledge about these centers could be included in RA/GA training, so that RAs and GAs could better serve those students with questions about faith-based issues.

Priority for the Committee’s Work in AY 2010-2011

1. Review the PULSE survey and other information about the climate among students, staff and faculty; evaluate the findings of these surveys; and consider how this information could be used to improve the quality of life at Penn.
2. Follow-up on recent Committee areas of interest, including dining, graduate housing, and provision of mental health services to ensure the highest quality University experience for students, faculty, and staff.
3. Continue to investigate the contributions of centers and other entities throughout the University, and particularly how the contributions can be enhanced.

Committee on Campus & Community Life 2009-2010

Chair: Philip Nichols (Wharton); Faculty: Kent Bream (Med), Judd Holland (Med), Chanita Hughes-Halbert (Med), Sandy Schwartz (Med/Wharton), Marilyn Stringer (Nursing), Henry Teune (SAS); PPSA: Karlene Burrell-McRae (Makuu), Gail Oberton (Equity & Access); WPPSA: Laura Graham (SFS), Loretta Hauber (Weingarten Learning Resources Center); Administrative Liaison: Ajay Narang (VPU); Staff: June Chu (Pan-Asian American Community House); Graduate Students: Michael Pinkhasov (GSE); Sylvi Selwender (SAS); Undergraduate Student: Jacqueline Chaudhry (SAS).

Committee on Diversity and Equity

General Committee Charge

The Committee on Diversity and Equity aids Penn in fostering and taking full advantage of its diversity as well as in strengthening ties across all boundaries to enrich and enliven the campus community. The Committee shall advise the offices of the president, provost, and the executive vice presidents on ways to develop and maintain a supportive atmosphere on campus for the inclusion and appreciation of diversity among all members of the University community. The Committee will review and provide advice regarding the University’s equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and policies. The areas in which the Committee shall report to the Council include diversity within the educational and work settings, integration of staff and faculty into the larger campus community, and ways to foster a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of difference. The Committee also will advise the administration on specific diversity issues that may arise on campus.

2009-2010 Specific Charges

1. Continue joint efforts with the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs to: • Advocate for broader and more effective outreach efforts to recruit minority faculty • Encourage individual schools to develop plans for diversifying the faculty • Consider the recommendation for Deans to report on their diversity and equity plans
2. Initiate discussions with Deans to promote the expedient mounting of links to school and university diversity programs on each School’s homepage.
3. Continue to investigate the presence of Penn faculty with expertise to design mechanisms to further assess campus climate surveys such as PULSE and COHFE and determine how some peer institutions have used faculty on similar assessment projects.
4. Develop recommendations for a feasible way of organizing a small university-wide postdoctoral fellowship program for individuals whose research is linked to broadly conceived questions of diversity.
5. Continue to monitor the implementation of gender-neutral campus policies.
6. 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 AY 2010-2011.

The Committee would like to begin by publicly acknowledging just a few of the University’s most recent accomplishments and successes vis-à-vis diversity/equity issues. A few of these efforts have been tethered to this Committee’s specific charges in recent years, and we are very excited to share even some small credit in helping to facilitate their realization.

• The University has recently revised its written Policy of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination. The new statement is currently online.
• Penn has started to acquire, analyze and disseminate quantitative data on the campus climate for undergraduates and has also begun to plan a similar process with its faculty.
• Thanks to the Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs, the Deans, and the office of the Vice Provost for Research, Penn has successfully launched an important new University-wide postdoctoral fellowship program linked to the theme of diversity.
• The University has extended a new health benefit to transgender students, covering the costs associated with gender reassignment/transition.
• The University has recruited its first Native American admissions officer, which has aided admissions efforts with Native American students.

Themes/Topics Discussed This Academic Year

• The continuing vacancy in the Affirmative Action Office;
• The timetable and architecture for the proposed Affirmative Action website;
• The new University initiatives aimed at female professors on campus;
• The degree of “community” and communication among URM faculty, students, and staff;
• The proposal to expand Penn’s health coverage for faculty, students and staff such that it might also include transgender health benefits;
• Grossing-up as a way to mitigate financial disparities predicted on the economic implications of heteronormative IRS policies;
• The configuration of the University showers in recreational facilities for increased individual privacy; the potential need for more single-sex bathrooms

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www.upenn.edu/almanac
in recreational facilities;
• The notion of expanding our campus-climate initiatives to include graduate students, faculty and staff;
• Stanford’s adoption of an official pro-marriage position;
• The idea of institutionalizing an exit interview/survey for departing faculty,
• The University’s approach to recruiting/retaining URM faculty/graduate students and female professors;
• The absence of any tenured or tenure-track Native American faculty at Penn;
• A subset met consistently with the Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity to discuss faculty recruitment, mentorship, and retention issues.

Committee Recommendations
• As we wait on the unveiling of a central Diversity website/link, the Provost’s office should consider housing diversity links from each of Penn’s 12 schools. This site (with these links) should probably remain even after any forthcoming Diversity website is launched.
• We support the University’s commitment to the idea of slowly expanding its new Postdoctoral Fellowship for Academic Diversity to include (in the future) as many as six to eight postdoctoral fellows in its annual cohorts.
• The Committee fully supports the Provost office’s valuable workshops on "unconscious bias." We would suggest that the Provost consider asking Deans to use this workshop/training more consistently, institutionalizing it as a mandatory prerequisite for serving on faculty and administration search committees within their schools. This could be a certification process that is completed online and that covers participants for three or four years before any necessary recertification.
• We support the Personal Benefits Committee in its recommendation that the University very seriously consider the idea of extending its health coverage to include transgender health benefits for staff and faculty.
• We recommend that the University continue to prepare for the launch of a “campus-climate” survey among faculty. We would hope that this could prepare the way for similar initiatives vis-à-vis graduate students and staff. It would be beneficial to institutionalize and regularize intervals between the administering and analyzing of each of these instruments.
• We consider that the requisite Dean’s be approached with the idea of re-leasing the last four faculty members from one course each, such that they can collaborate on designing and possibly executing a qualitative supplement to the statistical data culled from COHFE and PULSE. We might also consult with other universities that have successfully deployed faculty in such efforts.
• We support the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity in its suggestion that the Office of the Provost set a mandate for Deans to produce and circulate a Diversity Plan for their respective Schools.
• We recommend that the University continue to explore the practice of “growing up” as a way to counter the financial inequities caused by the heteronormative bias inherent in IRS policy.
• We recommend that the University continue to seek full enforcement of its gender-identity and sexual orientation non-discrimination policy on all forms and publications.
• We recommend that the University continue to foster ways of improving communication and information/knowledge dissemination about diversity-related themes across campus. For example, is there any possible way to create consistent ties between this committee and the Diversity Committee linked to Penn’s Board of Trustees?
• We endorse the Target of Opportunity search process as a mechanism for diversifying the faculty.

Possible Charges for 2010-2011
• Helping to finalize the architecture for a forthcoming Diversity website.
• Continuing joint efforts with the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity.
• Continuing to consider ways of adding a qualitative component to University efforts at assessing campus climate, including consultation with Penn faculty who might help to design it.
• Continuing to monitor the implementation of gender-nonspecific campus policies, including the possibility of installing more private showers in recreational bathrooms and providing broader housing options for incoming undergraduates who identify as transgender.
• Collecting data on current diversity initiatives within all 12 Schools.

Committee on Facilities

This report has three sections. The first section contains the Committee’s responses to the charges presented to it. The second section contains some general observations about the Committee’s efforts over the past several years. The third section recommends some modifications to the Committee’s approach and specific suggestions for activity next year.

Section I. Responses to Specific Charges

1. “Continue to review and discuss the needs on campus for facilities not under supervision of specific schools, for example meeting rooms, rehearsal rooms, performance space, “pick-up” athletics, and offices for certain organizations.

Although this is the first of the listed formal charges, the Committee reached it last, and hence made little progress. This subject should be a major focus of the committee’s work next year (see Section III).

2. “Continue to discuss and consider recommendations to ensure pedestrian and bicycle safety.”

The subcommittee on pedestrian and bicycle safety met several times during the course of the year, and benefited from discussions with representatives from the Division of Public Safety and with Mark Kocent, the University’s Traffic Planner. At the present time, bicyclists riding near campus must traverse a vague array of ill-marked bicycle lanes and contend with parking in those lanes—often by University vehicles—and with the disdain and arrogance of many Philadelphia drivers. Many bicyclists, fearing for their lives but reluctant to walk their bicycles, ride them illegally on the sidewalks, occasionally at dangerously high speed.

The University is not unaware of these problems, and has taken some steps to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Bicycle corrals are being installed to provide commuting bicyclists with safe storage locations. Signs have been installed on Locust Walk to inform bicyclists of the rules governing riding there. A number of new traffic lights have been installed to provide better signals to pedestrian and motorists. It is also important to recognize that the City of Philadelphia, rather than the University, must take responsibility for off-campus improvement. However, the Committee believes a more rapid approach to the problem must be found.

It is essential that improvements to pedestrian safety be accompanied by improvements to the safety of bicyclists. The bicycle lanes must be clearly identified and maintained. It is unrealistic either to expect motorists to avoid the lanes if they are not clearly visible or to expect bicyclists to use the lanes if they cannot be found. Double parking that blocks the bicycle lanes must be eliminated. This will require changes in habits, and may require some new delivery arrangements. It is not realistic to expect that the University’s Division of Public Safety or the Philadelphia Police can improve the behavior of all Philadelphia drivers. However, more frequent citation of drivers who ignore the rights of bicyclists riding near the University might change the behavior of some of them.

Most of the danger to pedestrians from motorists stems from pedestrians’ ignorance of traffic signals and their assumption that all motorists will promptly stop at marked crosswalks. In these cases, pedestrians control their own safety. There are a few street crossings (such as 34th and Walnut Streets, 38th and Spruce Streets, and Convention Avenue directly across from the University City SEPTA station) that could benefit from having a member of Public Safety monitoring traffic at particularly busy times.

The danger to pedestrians from bicyclists is primarily due to bicyclists (continued on next page)
Committee on Facilities

(continued from page 5)

either not understanding or knowingly violating traffic regulations. Pedestrians are menaced by riders who ride on the University’s pathways, who ride on public sidewalks, who ride the wrong way on one-way streets, and who deliberately ride through red lights. Changing their behavior would require education, new signage along sidewalks, the construction of better-planned bicycle lanes, and at least a short period of intensive enforcement. Another hazard is the use of cell phones—and the resulting inattention to traffic conditions—by motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

It seems to the Committee that a short intensive campaign to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety might produce major changes, which could then be reinforced by shorter campaigns each fall. The campaign should begin with improvements to bicycle safety, so that bicyclists do not feel that safety of pedestrians comes entirely at the expense of their safety. Such a campaign must begin with a period of education organized at the highest levels of the University. It would be unfair, as well as much less effective, if such a campaign appeared to be solely at the initiative of Public Safety. This campaign must include:

For Safety of Bicyclists

• Repaint existing bike lanes on Spruce, Walnut, Chestnut, 33rd, 34th and 38th Streets.
• Eliminate double parking that blocks bike lanes. This may require designation of new loading areas and better utilization of existing loading docks.

For Safety of Pedestrians

• Place signage on public sidewalks to deter bicyclists from riding there rather than walking or riding in the street.
• Increase enforcement of prohibitions against riding on main campus walkways and on public sidewalks.
• Intercept and cite bicyclists who ride against traffic and who ignore traffic signals.

In the longer run it might be useful to assemble a task force with representatives of interested constituencies to consider changes in the pedestrian and bicycle routes near and through campus. The current use of streets and sidewalks has evolved without much concern for the needs of bicyclists. While it is obviously impossible to completely redesign the campus, a more rational use of the space that is available for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians might help solve many of our problems.

An alternative, of course, is to do nothing. Bicycling and walking near and on campus will remain much less pleasant than they might be, and, with good luck, we will experience no serious accident over the next few years. When that serious accident does happen, however, we will regret giving inadequate attention to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the report of the 2008-2009 Facilities Committee contained similar, although less detailed, recommendations.

3. “Monitor the extent and use of green space on campus and receive updates on the progress of Penn Park.”

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 both Mark Kocent and David Hollenberg, who gave detailed explanations of the University’s plans for green space in its development plans, with particular details regarding Penn Park. In addition, the subcommittee met with members of the Department of Recreation with the goal of both obtaining information and looking at specific needs of this group regarding green space, recreation space, and open playing green space.

Overall the Committee is pleased with the plans which are being undertaken by the University concerning green space and open playing green space. Penn Park has broken ground and will substantially increase the total green space and open playing green space for the University. The current plan calls for artificial turf to be used as the base material for some of the planned fields expected to have heavy usage. There are also separate all-grass fields included in the plan. In addition to Penn Park, several other projects are being planned to increase the overall amount of green space on campus and include Shoemaker Green and the Museum Plaza.

The Committee has some concerns about the maintenance of our current grass fields and how this will impact Penn Park. This has become much more of a concern with current recreation fields (Hill and Highline) suffering noticeable wear during this year and in past years. This experience leads to concerns about the plans to maintain the future fields in Penn Park. The Committee feels that a more extensive plan should be considered to maintain our current fields and to ensure that Penn Park’s grass fields stay in usable condition. We feel that hiring a professional turf management firm or groundskeeper within Facilities itself may be necessary to adequately monitor and care for these fields.

There are several potential alternates in the plans for Penn Park that may be added if the budget allows. These alternates include but are not limited to upgrades to the softball stadium and the proposed Ropes Course. They would also serve as a draw to the campus community to this area for recreational activities and could be used for both scheduled and non-scheduled social activities. The Committee asks that these add-on projects be considered as the project moves forward.

Regarding student access to Penn Park: The Committee feels that plans should be made to include Penn Park in the University’s shuttle and bus service. This will improve both access to the park and provide improved safety for the University community. Accessibility and adequate parking for bicyclists should also be provided.

In future years it would be prudent for this Committee, perhaps in conjunction with concerned administrators and student organizations, to continue to monitor the preservation of green space on campus, which remains a significant and unique advantage of Penn as an urban and also very green campus: a twenty-first century “green country town.”

4. “Review policy and practice concerning maintenance of facilities and new construction and make recommendations as appropriate.”

A casual observation reveals a significant disparity among facilities available to individual schools. Relatively new and recently-renovated buildings are generally attractive, incorporate modern energy efficiencies and are, we assume, well suited to the needs of their occupants. At the other extreme, some of the buildings appear to be quite shabby, with ill-fitting, single-glazed windows which seem to belie the University’s focus on sustainable energy use. We have not done an examination of the interiors of buildings, but those with which we are familiar reveal the same kind of disparities.

We were given a very clear and helpful overview of the University’s role in facility renewal from Joseph Monahan, principal planning engineer for the University. He and his colleagues appear to have a very clear understanding of major needs across the University. The priorities for elements of facility renewal are regularly reviewed and revised. Unfortunately, the funds available from the University administration for facility renewal are not nearly sufficient to meet the needs, and most large projects are funded cooperatively by the University and individual schools. Extremely high priority projects—such as major leaks in a building’s envelope—are given prompt attention, but projects of less urgency depend on the resources individual schools can make available. This tends to mean that schools which are least successful in identifying funding are unable to properly maintain their buildings, and must make do with inferior and inefficient facilities. Creative administrative or financial approaches to close the gap are needed.

Two obvious concerns: First, it is clear to us that the current level of total funding devoted to facility renewal is insufficient to prevent the backlog of needed projects from growing. New buildings, which often bring debt service on construction loans but seldom come with maintenance funds, simply exacerbate the problem. Second, the current system of shared funding between schools and the University inevitably means that the disparity between facilities available to prosperous schools and to less-prosperous schools will continue and may even grow, perpetuating the sense that the University is an academic holding company rather than a cohesive institution. Perhaps this approach is best for the overall financial health of the University, but presenting an assortment of buildings ranging from splendid castles to aging hovels does have some cost to its reputation.

The report of the 2007-2008 Facilities Committee contains observations on maintenance which are little different from those above. In view of this, and in view of the apparent intractability of the problem, it probably makes sense for the Committee to give this subject a rest for a few years.

Section II. Some Observations

The Committee has some sense that a) its charges and its recommendations are little changed from year-to-year and b) no one is paying much attention to the recommendations. While the latter may be a misperception, it would be encouraging to get some specific responses from appropriate administrative units within the University.

A review of Committee reports for the past few years makes depressing reading. The 2005-2006 Committee appears to have spent the fall semester

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deliberating whether it had sufficient justification to continue in existence. Since that Committee was concerned that it was duplicating efforts of other committees it compiled a list of such committees, and recommended a mutual exchange of minutes. There is no record either of the list or of any exchanges of minutes.

The report of the 2006-2007 Committee addresses the need for maintaining and expanding open playing space on campus. The report of the 2007-2008 committee addressed deferred maintenance issues, and raised concerns about the problems that would arise from the closing of the South Street Bridge. The report of the 2008-2009 Committee contained a long set of observations and recommendations on pedestrian/bicycle safety. It is not obvious that any of these recommendations, over those four years, have had any significant effect.

Section III. Specific Suggestions
The Committee should focus on one or two major topics each year. It should also look more carefully at the effects of past recommendations. One focus for the 2010-2011 Committee should be general-use space not controlled by specific schools. It should begin with a careful survey of the existing space and of the current unmet needs for such space. This survey will provide the basis for informed discussion and rational suggestions.

The 2010-2011 Committee should also assess the progress that the University is making in other areas that past Committees have studied, such as bicycle and pedestrian safety. The new South Street Bridge is expected to reopen in late 2010, and the Committee should note the effect of this opening on both vehicular and bicycle traffic to and from the campus. Although Penn Park will probably not be complete by the end of the 2010-2011 academic year, the Committee should monitor its progress.

One of the perennial problems with the Facilities Committee has been attendance. Some members of the Committee have been regular and active participants, but some others seldom attend or even respond to notices of meetings. It is possible that this is a reflection of the chair’s style of managing the meetings, the lack of interest in the business of the Committee, the press of competing responsibilities, or a sense that the committee’s recommendations fall on deaf ears. In any case, it is not appropriate that committee members accept membership and then fail to participate in the committee’s business. The 2010-2011 Committee should adopt specific guidelines for attendance at the meetings. One possibility: any members who cannot attend regularly, either because of lack of interest or conflicting responsibilities, should be dropped from the Committee and the organizations that appointed them should be asked to appoint replacements.

One last concern that has occasionally surfaced in committee discussions is the future use of Penn Park. This park, coupled with the Weiss Center, will provide unexcelled new facilities for organized athletic activities conveniently close to the older athletic facilities. It is not clear that Penn Park will easily become a major focus for Penn students seeking more casual recreational opportunities. For most Penn students Clark Park is closer to their residences than Penn Park. One possibility—admittedly pessimistic—is that casual users of Penn Park will be mostly Drexel students, Left Bank residents, and gangs of youthful skateboarders.

Space at the north end of Penn Park has been reserved for “future development.” While it is probably too early for giving serious thought to the details of what that development might be, it will eventually present an opportunity to plan for facilities that would be a draw for all of the Penn community. Some combination of student housing and student activity space there might help integrate the east campus with the rest of the University.

The short time—barely six months—in which the Committee must function remains a serious problem. If members of the Committee were identified by the end of the spring semester it would be possible to extend this time. Copies of Committee reports—and of responses to those reports—of the previous five years should be provided to members at the time of their appointments. These reports would help provide context to the committee’s deliberations, and give members a sense of the effects of the deliberations of previous committees.

Committee on Facilities 2009-2010
Chair: Walter Wales (SAS); Faculty: Charles Branis (Med), Michael McGarvey (Med), Eric Orts (Wharton), Witold Ryczynski (Design), Bernard Shapiro (Vet), Richard Shlansky-Goldberg (Med), Susan Weiss (Med); PPSA: Lisa Anzalone (SFS), Ivan Shin (SAS); WPPSA: TBA, Karima Williams (Law); Administrative Liaison: David Hollenberg (University Architect); Staff: Taylor Berkowitz (Office of the University Architect); Graduate Students: Alexandra Dews (LPS); Undergraduate Students: Ankri Dhir (Wharton), Adrienne Warril (SAS).

Committee on Personnel Benefits
The Committee has met six times this year, with one additional meeting scheduled for August to review retiree medical benefits for 2011 and any implications of changes in Medicare, health care reform, and the final regulations on mental health parity.

The Committee approved a statement of philosophy concerning the principles to be considered in reviewing benefits, our role as committee members, and procedures to help committee members understand the highly technical issues we discuss (available in Appendix A).

Health Care Benefits
The Committee reviewed recent experience in our prescription drug program and multiple proposals from CVS/Caremark for changes in prescription benefits to improve performance and help contain costs. We approved several cost-saving measures, including a co-pay structure to provide an incentive to use CVS/Caremark mail or retail pharmacy for refills of maintenance medication beginning with the fourth refill, informational mailings to encourage generic utilization, and enhanced safety reviews to alert prescribers to problems such as duplicate or inappropriate medication prescriptions. These changes will contribute to cost containment for the health plans while maintaining employee access to prescription medications.

The committee also reviewed information on the requirements of the Mental Health Parity Act of 2008 and its implications for the design of Penn plans. To meet these requirements, date and visit limits for behavioral health visits were lifted and cost share features were matched in retiree plans for 2010 and active employee plans for fiscal year 2011. Also, Independence Blue Cross/Keystone has agreed to develop integration of information with Penn Behavioral Health to provide for a combined maximum out-of-pocket for behavioral health and medical visits, as well as certain other plan provisions. In addition, Penn Behavioral Health has been working on a redesign for the PPO and POS plans to ensure that requirements for precertification and review of medical necessity are comparable for behavioral health and medical/surgical benefits.

Recommendations for the Future
The Committee understands that the University has currently adopted a policy of financial prudence and controlling costs which makes it difficult or impossible to introduce new benefits. However, we expect that the financial situation will improve, and when it does there are two changes in benefits that we recommend as very high priority for review and implementation.

In response to requests for coverage of transgender health benefits, the Committee has reviewed information on the prevalence and treatment of Gender Identity Disorder and the experience of other employers who have included coverage of transgender health benefits. We learned that

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the American Medical Association endorses health insurance coverage for medical treatment of Gender Identity Disorder with triadic treatment (mental health care, hormone therapy, and sex realignment surgery). The cost of coverage of triadic treatment for Gender Identity Disorder is expected to be low because Gender Identity Disorder is relatively rare; e.g., when the city of San Francisco added transgender health benefits, the increase in cost was less than $1.00 per employee per year (2001-5). Based on this information and other information we reviewed, and in accord with the University’s principle of non-discrimination and the provisions of the Mental Health Parity Act, we recommend coverage of triadic treatment for Gender Identity Disorder in the Aetna HMO plan.

The Committee has received repeated requests over many years from the Weekly-Paid Penn Professional Staff Assembly for changes in the employee tuition assistance program to provide tuition assistance for employees who want to pursue higher education, but cannot gain admission to Penn programs and may be unable to succeed in Penn courses. We have investigated the patterns of use of the current employee tuition benefit at Penn, the characteristics of employee tuition assistance benefits at peer institutions, and past and current changes in CGS/LPS policies relevant to this issue. We have developed a preliminary proposal for a portable employee tuition benefit for employees who do not already have a BA or AA to take courses leading to a bachelor’s or associate degree at a local accredited college or university. We propose a six-month to one-year waiting period for new hires to use this proposed portable tuition benefit and a maximum rate of reimbursement of 40% of the tuition rate for LPS undergraduate courses. Next year, we hope to receive additional information which will allow us to refine our proposals and develop proposals for offsetting the cost of any proposed portable employee tuition benefit.

Other Issues Reviewed
We also reviewed reports on several changes in benefits:
- a pilot program to provide free funeral or cremation planning and concierge services through Aetna, our group life insurance provider, which has a relationship with Everest
- the new Back-up Care program to help Penn employees get to work when they need temporary, short notice care for dependent children or adults
- a new voluntary phased retirement program for staff
- new Roth 403b plan
- a three-year vesting period for Penn’s Tax-Deferred Retirement (TDR) Plan, affecting only individuals hired after January 1, 2010; employees leaving before three years will forfeit the University contributions to their retirement plan.

We are pleased to note that all but the last of these changes provides enhancements of options for Penn employees.

Proposed Specific Charges for 2010-2011
1. Continue to develop proposals for changes in the tuition assistance program for employees pursuing coursework inside and outside the University.
2. Review coverage of services for children with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum
3. Review whether to request that staff consult with the Committee when making decisions whether to comply with state mandates which are optional for the University.
4. Review the requirements of Health Care Reform and consider needed changes in University benefits.
5. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of Aetna’s disease management procedures.
6. Explore the possibility of providing health advocates as a benefit for employees.
7. Explore the possibility of raising the maximum annual dental benefit, so that the dental plan would function more like insurance to cover high costs.

Committee on Personnel Benefits 2009-2010
Chair: Ingrid Waldron (SAS); Faculty: David Asch (Wharton), Erling Boe (GSE), Howard Goldline (Med), Scott Harrington (Wharton), David Pope (SEAS), Gerald Porter (SAS), Barbara Wall (Nursing); PPSA: Valerie Doorn (SAS); Victoria Mathern (Med); Lynn Rotoli (FRES); WPPSA: Kelly Dewees (VPUL), Peter Rockett (SEAS), Linda Satchell (PPPS); Administrative Liaisons: Leny Bader (HR), Jack Heuer (HR); Staff: Amy Coe (HR).

We are grateful to Leny Bader, executive director of Benefits, Jack Heuer, vice president of Human Resources, and the staff from Human Resources for their excellent staff support for the Committee and for their efforts to improve benefits for Penn employees.

Appendix A
Philosophy and Practice for the University Council Committee on Personnel Benefits
Adopted by the Committee, September, 2009

General Philosophy
Most of the principles we propose are from the report of the Benefits Advisory Committee which reviewed benefits programs in 1997. The principles from this report are shown in quotation marks below and were endorsed by the President, Provost and Executive Vice President at that time. We have added one clarification (second half of 4).
1. “The cost of employee benefits must be managed and contained while providing for a range of benefits that assists employees in achieving income protection, lifelong savings, health care, and professional and personal development.”
2. “Penn’s benefits must be competitive in the different markets in which Penn competes for faculty (national and international), administrators (local and national), and support staff (local).”
3. “Penn’s practices should conform to the best practices of benefits design: tax efficiency, cost-effectiveness, high value for expenditure, shared responsibility, compliance with the law, and administrative simplicity.”
4. “No single group should bear a disproportionate burden for benefits cost containment.” For example, the Committee should aim for affordable benefits for lower-wage employees and medical, prescription and dental insurance that avoid excessive personal costs for those with very high expenses.
5. “Benefits that are greatly valued by employees should be retained if at all possible, although even these benefits may require change.”

Our role as committee members is to review current policies and proposed changes in the context of these principles and to suggest modifications to better achieve these goals. Ideally, each committee member will act in the best interest of all employees and the University, but this overall goal is achieved in part by each committee member providing input that reflects their experience and the concerns of their constituents. In pursuing its initiatives, the Committee will be conscious of the multiple institutional priorities and the limited budget and time resources available in the Human Resources Division.

General Procedures to Help Committee Members Understand Technical Discussions
At the first fall meeting or whenever the Committee first discusses medical, prescription or dental insurance in each academic year, presenters should review the basic design of the plans (including costs and benefits), with careful written and oral explanations of technical terms and acronyms. Request all presenters to make sure their presentations are clear for people who are not familiar with relevant technical terms and acronyms; if appropriate, include definitions of terms and relevant background information from earlier presentations in the handout.

After each meeting, if appropriate, send the handouts to anyone who missed the meeting.

* We have omitted a sixth principle which does not seem relevant for the current work of the Personnel Benefits Committee. “The employee benefits package must be simplified and clarified while allowing for meaningful choice, in order for employees to better understand and utilize their benefits.” The Report is available on pages 13-23 of www.upenn.edu/almanac/s43pdf/021197.pdf.