

SPRING GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2009. 2:00 P.M. JRC-101.

Minutes from the open portion of the meeting:

- Matt Imber '09 invited the campus community to the All-Campus Hoe-Down on April 4. The Hoe-Down is sponsored by the Wellness Program and Student Affairs.
- Marci Sortor (Associate Dean and Vice President for Institutional Planning) gave an overview of the current economic conditions and answered some questions from the floor. A few of the main points follow. There are four main sources of money for the college's working budget: Gifts, Auxiliaries (e.g., bookstore, dining services), Tuition, and Endowment. About half of the operating revenue comes from our endowment. The current economy really has hit all sources of the college's revenue in some way.

When planning the next year's budget, there are some guidelines put in place by the board of trustees. For example, the college can only spend 4% of the total endowment in a given year, and there is a 5% limit on how much spending can be increased or decreased to the next year's budget. These amounts are calculated from a 12-quarter rolling average (averaged over the previous three years), so the operating budget is somewhat insulated against large cuts or gains from year to year.

All areas of the college are looking at ways to dial back spending. We have already cut back on endowment spending and discretionary spending. The fiscal year 2010 (July 2009 to June 2010) budget is still evolving, but basically we are already operating at the necessary decreased level of spending given the reductions we have already made. Early modeling of the FY 2011 budget also considers a 5% decrease. Even if the market has started to rebound by then, remember the 12-quarter rolling average which will create a slow rebound for the budget, but that also allows the endowment to recover more before our budget sees those increases again.

A question was asked about a pay freeze. At present the budget proposal includes a small increase for those under a certain level of compensation. A question was asked about promotions. That doesn't have a simple answer; promotions will have to be handled on a case-by-case basis. A question was asked about reduction in staff benefits; specifically the tuition remission. There is no planned reduction in benefits; the tuition remission is set by the associations (ACM or GLCA) to which we belong.

- Elena Bernal '94 (Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Achievement) gave an update on the campus climate assessment on-going with consultants from Rankin & Associates. The survey will be released in the next week (available online or on paper, with a version for students, staff, and faculty), and supervisors will be contacted regarding employees being compensated for their time to complete the survey.

Your honesty when taking the survey is very important. Elena stressed the anonymity of your responses. Computer IP addresses are not collected while completing the survey online. All responses are collected by Rankin & Associates, who then compiles the data and reports back to the college. Anyone who has questions about how the survey responses are kept anonymous can contact Elena or Rankin & Associates.

The survey will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. Because the survey is anonymous, people who take the survey online will have to complete the survey at one time (it cannot be saved and returned to later). However, it can be taken from any computer.

What happens after the survey? Data will be reported back to the college in the Summer of 2009. This will include findings and recommendations from the consultants. College administrators will develop strategies for improving the campus community, and in the Spring of 2010 the college expects to start implementing those ideas.

Minutes from the Support Staff only portion of the meeting:

- Retta Kelley gave an update on what the SSRC has accomplished in recent months:
 - Facilitated the “fact-finding” discussion for support staff with Rankin & Associates in the Fall of 2008.
 - Input into the Staff Handbook.
 - Input into revisions of the performance review process; we may see some of these changes already this spring.
 - One of us was asked to serve on the Parking Committee.
- Results of the elections for new members of the SSRC:
 - Sondi Burnell (Academic Support), 2-year position
 - Nettie Vaverka (Admission), 2-year position
 - Lynda Hendrickson (Financial Aid), 1-year position
 - Karla Landers (Library), Alternate

Congratulations new members! Continuing members from this year are Ranae Hamor and Stephanie Peterson, who will serve the second year of their terms in '09-'10 with the new members.

- Our comment box was available for items to be considered by the SSRC during its scheduled monthly meetings. No comments were received at this time.

Thank you to Human Resources for providing the refreshments for the Spring General Meeting!

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Peterson - SSRC Secretary

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2009.

The Support Staff Relations Committee (SSRC) is concerned with working conditions and general benefits at Grinnell College. The SSRC is not mandated to involve itself with personnel matters relating to specific incidents or individual cases.

Feel free to contact the current members!

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