

Staff Council Minutes

December 5th, 2011

Present: Carol Van Houten, John Bellacosa, Lindsey Wyckoff, Carol Begnoche, Jeanne Raichle, Diana Pondt, Arianne Kailas, Cathleen Wiggins, Barbara Dubitsky, Akilah Rosado McQueen, Matthew Borgmeyer, Mollie Welsh Kruger, Emily Lindsay, Jeannie Crowley, Agatha Forrester, Cheryl Simon, Caitlin Terry, Joy Ellebbane, Audrey Pryce, Margie Jimenez

1. Introduction to New Member

2. Update from Audrey on Zeny's Movie-

- a. We'll be showing it in March, January wasn't good for the graduate school, February is Black History Month, early March will work best, Zeny is willing to loan the movie out, would we want a Staff Council showing?
- b. Will the film maker be available?- No, but someone from Columbia has offered to moderate discussion, possible able to Skype teachers in
 - i. In terms of Skyping people in- Jeanie talked about a proposal to update our technology in the auditorium, it would cost \$7,600 for the update, wrote a hardware/software proposal, if we updated it, in one or two events it would pay for itself, still need to raise about \$2,500.
- c. Do we have to have a fundraiser attached to this film?- The past fundraiser that was done (at another venue) raised \$14,000 that they gave to the legal team that's helping these teachers, we don't have to raise that much money but they would be happy to accept any donation we gave them
- d. Do you need help planning this event?- Yes, we'll talk about this when we get back from the holiday break, we'll take a look at the March calendar

3. Staff Council Wellness Initiative

- a. Yoga has one more session left (out of 10)
- b. In the Spring, Ricky will be leading a "Boot Camp," first come first serve for 15 people, it will take place on Fridays from 5:15-6:15
- c. We should take alternate names in case one of the 15 people doesn't show up
- d. Could people pay if they wanted to join?

4. Update from Elizabeth Dickey

- a. Glad to be here, there was a small fire on the 7th floor, brings to mind safety and health and wellness, we were quick to extinguish the fire but speaking of the building I would like to talk about the Facilities Master Plan
- b. Talking a lot about the condition of the building, has been an institutional issue for quite some time now, needed to investigate

more about what people meant about “space issues,” we have been given different options for the future

- c. Some history- This building is 40 years old, moved here from 69 Bank Street when we outgrew that space, Lindsey Wyckoff our archivist found correspondence related to activities here, Bank Street bought this site, Columbia students protested, they thought people were going to be rejected from their homes, Columbia was involved in encouraging us to move up here (beneficial for Columbia professors to send their kids here), Harry Weese was the architect, I really dislike this building from the design point of view, modeled after the “Brutalist” genre from the 1950/60s, he was a well regarded architect
- d. In response to the issues of space, raised money to engage an architectural firm, hired HLW and they will be coming to All-College to do a full presentation on their findings, HLW held focus groups (engaging more than 100 people who work here), did an engineering study, acknowledged that we need to bring this building up to code (sprinkler system), they looked at the elevators, they measured, surveyed trustees, collected a lot of data and came up with 5 options for us (low end to high end in terms of complexities and costs)
 - i. At the low end, we stay here and replace the elevators and sprinkler systems, but that wouldn’t improve the quality of life in the building, no new classrooms, (and it’s difficult for SFC teacher’s to leave their classrooms right after school for the graduate school to come in), no new gathering space for meeting people. Fixing the basics would cost between 3 and 4 million dollars, not a huge number but not small (with no aesthetic improvements)
- e. At the high end we would have a new building, one in or out of the neighborhood
- f. Have a developer, Museum of African Art at 5th Ave and 110th Street did a deal with a developer and designed a building where they built residences on top of the museum, this could be an example of a deal we could make... We DO NOT have a deal like this on the table yet
- g. If trustees like the option of moving to a new building, then we could pursue having a relationship with a developer
- h. If we build a building there’s an advantage because it allows us the ability to have influence on what our space looks like (more collaboration/work spaces in the library, social spaces, bigger gym with outdoor play space, more private space for the graduate school, bigger auditorium)
- i. We’ve made do in this space, but there’s definite frustration, John from HLW will be presenting us with our options including scenarios and financing
- j. Expectations in terms of response?- There will be a good opportunity for Q&A, opening up an institutional conversation, put our issues out

and trustees will decide, trustees do care what people in the building think

- k. Cathleen Wiggins- If we go for the High End notion... Have you thought about New Market Tax Credits? They built 124 low income apartments above the Children's Museum of Art, David Attager works at the Broadway Housing Committee and used new market tax credits in collaboration with a developer, we could take on an ambitious project, include Bank Street Head Start, a project that we could generate excitement around, more possible to raise money if there's innovation and excitement, take over big space so all of Bank Street could be together? More depth to people's giving if you have a compelling case
 - i. You're describing a civic activity
- l. Extremely skillful people worked on the African American Museum of Art, took 12 years
- m. We could sell this building for \$52 million, probably looking at a building that's \$100 million, that leaves us with paying \$48 million, could take out a bank loan considering we have a steady, growing enrollment, since our endowment is small we could borrow something like 23 million so you have a feeling for the gap. We would have to question what we would want the developer for? Different developers do different types of deals, the devil's in the details
- n. All discussions will unfold over time, it will probably take several years for the trustees to resolve this, I encourage you to come to the All-College to be part of this discussion
- o. When will the decision get made?- The first presentation by HLW was made for the trustees in October, it's been put in the parking lot until the trustee retreat which will happen this May. Will take a couple of years regardless

5. Architect Plan Debriefing- How can Staff Council help?

- a. Before we decide on a building, as an institution we should define what's important to us moving forward. The board is responsive to what we need, so for a positive outcome, we should get a good sense of what we want out of a building, the new building should serve a purpose of what we want to do
- b. What's our method of getting information to the trustees?- Surveys or workshops? Staff Associate Trustees can report to them
- c. Have done a concerted effort to collect information- 100 people in workshops (who were those 100 people?)
 - i. The info we'll get at All-College will reflect the responses that the architects got during these meetings
- d. Matt and Barbara give our responses to the board?
- e. Wonder if what we have to say is useful since this thing is not yet formed? Too early to express an opinion?

- i. Take back what I said about too soon... What do we want to do? We have to start thinking about our vision
- f. What's our vision? Family Center through grade 12? Fix it or change our vision for what we do?
- g. Have to decide what we are now, what works, what doesn't work.
- h. Configuration of classrooms... Making them lecture style would be making an assumption about our graduate school. We work well in more flexible spaces. Do they have a true picture of us?
- i. Trustees are looking to staff and faculty, responsive leadership, would want to hear what we have to say, surprised it's been so open to the community (unlike the logo)
- j. Put something online so that people could respond after the All-College?
- k. Immediacy of feedback on Twitter?
- l. Can we afford to keep having a Family Center? Do we need to do evaluations? Do we need to have SEITs? Family Center doesn't pay for itself
- m. I want to make a plug for in face conversations. Yes, online can happen too, but talking about vision in person seems important
- n. Like we did Budget Priority Committee focus groups... We can gather intimate groups of faculty/staff to have round table discussions about our vision and what we want from the future
 - i. Small group is something to consider in terms of voice and attention
- o. February cross divisional meeting with Grad School and School for Children, use this meeting for discussion, to debrief and problem solve, document for the Trustee retreat in May
- p. Vagueness around money raising, SFC endowment campaign?
- q. My hunch is if we're going to get big money we have to have substantial ideas, can't just be operating costs. Can't just propose to raise money to keep us comfortable
 - i. Expanding Family Center or adding a High School?
 - ii. Squeeze dollars out of municipal funds? New Market Credits? Neighborhood in need? Dreaming big but not unrealistic
- r. Think we all agree that option #1 is the weakest
- s. Have to generate staff and faculty interest in this discussion, cultivate our voice
- t. Enlarge/deepen our connection with Head Start?
- u. Demonstration school, larger, receptive to ideas from people closer to the work
- v. The Board is hollow, they don't know enough, I'm not putting them down, we could generate richness of ideas for them
 - i. This is not even on their agenda till May
- w. Next All-College can be a forum for these ideas? Come from the College as a whole, decide what our vision is

- x. Need to brainstorm about support outside of tuition, how do we support ourselves?
- y. If we're borrowing 23 million, there's interest attached to that
- z. Have housing upstairs?
- aa. Sounds like we're ready to move if the opportunity presented itself
- bb. How do we want to find the answer of what is important to us?
 - i. Add a slide to the presentation at All-College with our emails
 - ii. Whole January meeting we could talk about what's on people's minds (in terms of architectural planning)?
 - iii. Gather info from our meeting on Wednesday, can give us direction for our February All-College

6. Joint Children's Programs/Graduate School Day of Learning

- a. Small group is working to plan it for February 21st, opportunities to learn together
- b. Get people to All-College wrapped in the bigger picture, what's going to happen to the building?

7. Faculty Advisory Committee

- a. What is the situation of forming this committee?
- b. Staff Council and FAC complimentary?
- c. Will we continue to exist?
- d. Faculty group will cover more educational issues
- e. Other institutions of higher ed have similar committees