Friday March 25, 2008

SGA Senate Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order 7:05

II. Roll Call

Quorum Met

III. Guest Speaker Director of Finances – Rick Myers

a. Priorities of the College: Recruiting and retaining top faculty, financial aid (we discount our tuition more than any of the top colleges in the country), student residences, and environmental sustainability.
b. Is there any change that we as students will see over the next several years? Some people have already begun to see changes in houses, but in terms of strategic planning initiatives have been planned knowing that they will take more time to undertake.
c. Faculty cuts- We are not talking about cutting them, but returning the size of the faculty to the size it was in 1999 (285) because the size of our student body has not grown since then. We provide very extensive benefit packages to our faculty.
d. How did faculty end up unbalanced in the departments? Some positions were pre-fills, expecting that certain faculty members would be retiring. We were in a financial crunch in 2001/2002.
e. Controlling for engineering department in the ratio of students to faculty.
f. We also look at what other similar institutions have been able to mount in terms of resources, etc.
g. Does the college ever feel a space crunch? Actually they feel the reverse; the college has a great amount of building square footage, but only have 145 acres. Need to begin thinking about replacing certain building rather than expanding outward.
h. Once Ford Hall is built what happens to other science buildings? Two basic reasons for Ford Hall—to give engineering department advanced facilities they need, and need to provide some decompression within the science buildings. Once Ford opens new renovations will take place in Sabin Reed.
i. Financial Aid Program: Smith is discounting at about 40% (60% of Smithies are on aid); Harvard and other schools like this may not already be providing such a high rate of financial aid; Harvard eliminated all loan across the board (which makes this more expensive for the college across the board); This is the strategy they are using to be able to provide 50% of students aid; could smith afford to do something in this realm? We can afford to do anything we would like to do, it just has to do with our priorities (we couldn’t do this and all of our other efforts).
j. Real cost $56,000/student/year. Tuition roughly $43,000

h. Committee on investor responsibility—looks at current social issues and decides what issues the college would like to avoid becoming involved in. (e.g.: Smith took a position on Darfur deciding not to invest in any companies aiding the regime in Darfur).
i. How decisions are made in the college? It is a very participatory process; layers of groups that get involved in the process; ACRA council of students (SGA president),
faculty, and staff that meets monthly; board of trustees is the one who makes the ultimate decision.

IV. Minutes
3/2: Passed 40 here; 7 abstentions

V. Announcements
a. Earth Hour- Saturday 8pm lights off (fridges and computers would be great too) for an hour; Competition to see what house can run around and turn off most lights; 10-1pm after party
b. 2011 class party Sat 9-1 Davis Ballroom
c. Friday Jhalak 7-9 $5 dinner and show
d. Saturday Smith Democrats date auction Weinstein Auditorium
e. Consultation on “re-orientation” for sophomores CC102 Thursday 4PM
House updates
CAP Forum 5pm Weinstein

VI. Charter
a. Athletic Association charter revision review—want their election to be only org wide not campus wide (they no longer sit on cabinet and are not part of senate); whomever runs for president must serve on board for one year; 7 people serve on board—if non board member wants to run for president 4 board members must confirm them as a solid candidate
b. Athletic Association – charter revisions
   1. Section 4, A: passed 56 yes, 4 abstentions
   2. Article 6 Section III, Subpoint A #1: passed 29 yes; 8 no; 5 abstention
   3. Article 6 Section III, D: not passed 21 yes; 18 no; 5 abstentions (suggestion—whole org (except those who are going to run for president) should be able to approve student who wished to run for president that is not on the Executive board; maybe put in a time limit for how much time any AA representative should have served as rep.)
c. Psyched Club – charter not passed! 2 yes; 32 no; 10 abstentions
d. Judicial Board – charter revisions passed! 35 yes; 4 no; 5 abstentions

VII. Adjournment 9:00