Tuesday December 9, 2008

SGA Senate Meeting Minutes

I. Call to order: 7:03

II. Roll Call
   a. Missing/Tardy: 21
   b. Quorum Met

III. Minutes
   a. November 18, 2008 passed
   b. December 2, 2008 passed

IV. Guest Speaker: Carol Christ, President of Smith College
   a. The Economic Crises
      i. 30% of our budget from our endowment
      ii. Expecting a 30% loss of our endowment due to the crises
      iii. Anticipation of a 10% budget cut
      iv. We have sufficient reserves, as well as projects we can put on hold
      v. Carefully planning the next moves
      vi. Taken actions to put a ‘soft freeze’:
         1. Looking at staff vacancies, and deciding whether or not the position is
            essential to fill immediately
         2. Building projects put on hold
         3. Discussed the situation with the other 5-college Presidents
         4. Collaborations in order to save money, consolidating services
      vii. The board wants us to move forward boldly, and imaginatively
   b. Arming Public Safety
      i. Very hard decision for her, and the campus
      ii. Taking the opinions of students and Public Safety into careful consideration
      iii. Public Safety would like to be armed
      iv. Hold more forums about the question of arming Public Safety
   c. Questions for the President
      i. Biggest focus for the college before the economic crises
      ii. Smith’s Strategic Plan
      iii. Six goals for Smith College
         1. Strengthen essential student capacities
            a. Is the open curriculum still serving Smith well?
            b. Students unanimously in favor of keeping the open curriculum
            c. Faculty wanted the open curriculum to be more directed
         2. Increase opportunities for independent work
         3. Better integrate the programs we have to prepare you for life after Smith, outside the classroom
            a. New program: Narratives of Success
            b. Center for Women’s Financial Independence
         4. International Study
            a. Created the second Junior Year Abroad Program in the United States
            b. At the top of liberal arts colleges for number of Fulbright Scholars
            c. Working on getting more short term study abroad and more internships abroad
         5. Community engagement
a. Help community-based learning
b. Sustain relationships with the community
c. Create a center for community engagement to coordinate activities

6. Environmental Sustainability
   a. SEEDS: Center for Environmental Research Projects
   b. Works in conjunction with work being done by professors
   c. Physical location will be in the Clark Science Center

iv. How will the financial situation affect students with high financial need?
   1. Committed first and foremost to current students
   2. Students can ask to be re-evaluated by The Office of Financial Aid if their financial situation changes dramatically
   3. We want to avoid ‘gapping’
   4. We will avoid ‘gapping’ by weighing applicants against each other at the cut-off line, and more readily accept students with a lower need of financial aid

d. Increasing cross-registration between the 5-Colleges
   i. What would help Smithies in taking 5-College courses
   ii. Better transportation system
   iii. Blended classes, meet at different schools on different days
   iv. Ride board set up by the registrar
   v. Uncertainty of whether or not a student was accepted into the class
   vi. Possibility of having UMass classes located on Smith grounds
   vii. Having smaller major departments become 5-College majors
   viii. Making registration occur on a single day
   ix. Feedback tool for registration problems and successes

V. Charters:
   a. Transcending Gender
      i. 11 For, 21 Against, 10 Abstentions
      ii. Failed
      iii. Suggestions:
           1. Omit names
           2. Expand on the types of positions, and duties of the office holders

   b. Christian Science
      i. 25 For, 7 Against, 9 Abstentions
      ii. Passed

   c. MASSPirg
      i. 31 For, 0 Against, 10 Abstentions
      ii. Passed

VI. Adjournment 9:02