Steering Committee Minutes – October 9, 2009

Voting Members: Jyoti Sarkar (President), Bart Ng (Dean), Randall Roper for Xianzhong Wang (Bio), Barry Muhoberac (Chem), Snehasis Mukhopadhyay (CIS), Pierre Jacinthe (Earth Sc), Ricardo Decca (Phys), John McGrew (Psych), Will Geller (Math)

Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members: Kathleen Marrs (Associate Dean), Jane Williams (Past President), Mihran Tuceryan (Secretary)

1. President Sarkar called the meeting to order at 9:20 AM.
2. The agenda was approved unanimously.
3. John McGrew moved to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2009 meeting and Pierre Jacinthe seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
4. Dean Ng went over the following items:
   - A short update on the budget: The news is good. The School has an extra $2M after all the payments to the University. With this extra money, the School’s budget is now where Dean Ng’s plan was supposed to be in two years. The effect of decreased state funding can be viewed positively: The payback by the School due to 4.6% cut from the State appropriations is small: about $200K.
   - The enrollment trend is as predicted and the enrollments are growing where they should be.
   - No new news about the MLC building. He said everything seems to be going well including the vivarium issue which seems to be resolved. Next Tuesday (Oct 13), there will be a meeting about the lab building and Dean Ng will have more information then.
   - Dean pointed out that a capital campaign strategy is needed to develop funds to put in place one endowed chair per department in the School.
   - Dean Ng announced that the Acting Associate Deans Kathleen Marrs and Jeff Watt were approved to be appointed as permanent Associate Deans.
   - One goal of the School is to go after the best undergraduate students. Dean Ng pointed out that the IUPUI Honors College Dean Luzar will contribute money to go after the best undergraduate students with School of Science matching. A scholarship fund will be set up for $300K. The plan is to increase it to $1/2 M. Dean Ng pointed out that currently the offers are made too little too late to attract best students. This needs to change. The goal is to have the financial aid to be made at the point of admission and the offers need to be more generous. Also gradation is needed for offers to be made. School of Science would add money on top of $1300 from the University to the direct admit students to the School.

Questions:
Ricardo Decca asked what the fraction of commuters to the regular students are. Dean Ng answered this is not known. But he pointed out that Vice Chancellor Uday Sukhatme has hired a high end recruiter to go outside the State to recruit best students in order to expand the pool of best undergraduate students.
John McGrew pointed out that the state of residential halls at the University is a disadvantage for recruiting out of state students. Dean Ng pointed out that the
University is working on this issue. There are plans to build more residence halls along the Vermont St, fronting the parking garage there.

John McGrew asked about what would happen if there are more cuts from the State in addition to 4.6%. Dean Ng said the School can sustain more cuts without too much problems for the budget.

Will Geller asked whether any possible donors were identified yet for the endowed chair funds. Dean Ng replied no. Dean Ng pointed out that a strategy is needed before we can talk to donors. The definition of major gifts for the School needs to be more realistic (~$10K). The School needs to put in place a donation plan. Having a plan helps in the process of fundraising and talking to the donors. Dean Ng pointed out that Martin Bittinger endowed professorship paperwork was messed up and we may not be able to get any money due to legal reasons.

5. Dean Murphy was not at the meeting, therefore, could not brief the Committee on the proposals submitted for the School’s core infrastructure funds.

6. Dean Marrs briefed the Committee on the Howard Hughes proposals. Out of the 197 institutions that were invited to submit proposals about 40 are expected to be funded. There were two proposals submitted that included:

- Funds were asked for 6 postdoctoral fellows.
- Undergraduate research students (who are to work with Dean Luzar).
- Funds for 12 students for outreach American Chemical Society for summer research.
- The second proposal was in experiments in undergraduate education to develop computational thinking skills. It is to be an interdisciplinary major. $400K funds were asked.

7. Dean Ng announced that he was working on a second iteration of the School’s strategic plan, in particular, on the financial viability of the plan. The plan includes growing postdoctoral fellow positions in the School as well as graduate students. He pointed out that he may ask departments with less lab requirements to hire first until the lab building issue is resolved. Snehasis Mukhopadhyay asked if the postdoc positions are to be assigned to specific projects. Dean Ng replied no. They will be included in each department’s base budget and the departments will be responsible for managing the positions.

8. Jay Siegel’s proposal about having representatives of the Forensic and Investigative Sciences program on the School of Science committees was discussed. After a great deal of discussion, the committee voted unanimously that the proposal not be forwarded to the SOS Fall Faculty Assembly for a vote. The reasons included that there are many other programs in the School and this would create a lot of confusion as to which ones may be entitled to representation which ones would not. The Steering Committee’s sense was that the departments are well defined administrative entities and their representation is sufficient for the School committees.

9. Proposed amendments to the School Bylaws regarding the change in the representatives’ term length was discussed. The Steering Committee unanimously approved to send the proposed changes in the Bylaws for a vote in the SOS Fall Faculty Assembly on October 30.
10. The SOS Fall Faculty Assembly agenda were discussed. The following were suggested to be included in the agenda:
   - Committee reports (orally or written reports)
   - It was suggested to invite Chancellor Bantz to the meeting to talk about the plans for the MLC building.

11. Finding a candidate for the Purdue Faculty Senate was discussed. Snehasis Mukhopadhyay nominated Rajeev Raje from the Computer & Information Science department to be the IUPUI representative for the School of Science and School of Engineering at the Purdue Faculty Senate. Snehasis pointed out that Dr. Raje already interacts with his counterparts at West Lafayette and the Graduate School because of the PhD admissions and PhD qualifying exams in the department. Dean Ng is going to compensate the representative for travel expenses to attend the Senate meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM