

Committee on Priorities and Resources
Meeting Minutes – October 10, 2012

In attendance: Assistant Director Carol Allman-Morton, Prof. Rob Benedetto, Dean of the Faculty Gregory Call, *ex officio*, Christopher Friend '14, Treasurer Shannon Gurek, *ex officio*, Prof. Jagu Jagannathan, chair, Director of Human Resources Maria-Judith Rodriguez, *ex officio*, George Tepe '14, and Sarah Barr, recorder. Guests: Prof. Jyl Gentzler, Luke Lavin '13, Deidre Nelms'13, Peter Suechting '15.

Not in attendance: Rental Property Supervisor, Jonathan Devins, Prof. Nasser Hussain, and Prof. Karen Sánchez-Eppler.

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 pm.

Proceedings

1. Minutes – The minutes from September 26, 2012 were approved.
2. Online Courses – The committee continued to discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with online courses. The committee had many questions about the scope of contracts with 2tor and edX (What is the commitment? Who owns the intellectual property? If things do not go well, how will the college get out of the contract?), the fee structure (What is the cost per course? Is there an initial investment? What is the revenue structure?), and the incentives for students and faculty. Joining an online consortium might give faculty members the opportunity to learn about new pedagogies with colleagues at other institutions. It was not clear what the long-term budgetary implications would be.
3. Coal Divestment – Several students met with the CPR to discuss their hopes for the coal divestment campaign. Ultimately they would like the college to publish a statement in the investment policy so Amherst College will not have any direct holdings in coal since coal is inherently destructive (water pollution, mercury emissions, and greenhouse gasses). The students hope to reenergize the Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing, which was created in 2008 but has been dormant for several years. Rather than running a divestment campaign every year, it seems like it would be more effective for students to have an established forum for raising concerns.
4. Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) – There is ongoing discussion about the future home of the MRC. Students will present more information at a future meeting.
5. Writing Center – Prof. Jyl Gentzler meet with the CPR to discuss staffing needs. Currently 93% of all available appointments are booked and the remaining 7% represent last minute cancelations. Prof. Gentzler would like to convert a 28 hour casual position to a 32 hour regular position. Dean Call and Treasurer Gurek will work with Prof. Gentzler to find an immediate solution. The CPR will consider this request with other requests when it makes its recommendation to the senior administrators at the end of the year.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 24 at 4 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Barr