

Committee on Priorities and Resources  
Meeting Minutes – December 7, 2021

In attendance: Professor Nusrat Chowdhury; Professor Andrew Dole, chair; Professor Jill Miller; Professor Monica Ringer; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Catherine Epstein, *ex officio*; Interim Director of Financial Planning, Ashley Travis, *ex officio*; Assistant Director of Family Giving, Emily Ziomek; Allie Ho '24; Jaden Richards '25; Steven Hegarty, recorder

Not in attendance: Interim Director of Human Resources Chris Casey, *ex officio*; Retail Dining Supervisor Peter Charron; Interim Chief Financial Officer Thomas Dwyer, *ex officio*; Jae Yun Ham '22, *ex officio*

Guest: Jim Brassord, Chief of Campus Operations

The meeting came to order at 8:00 am.

Proceedings

Jim Brassord joined CPR to discuss capital expenditures and the state of campus facilities

1. Jim reviewed the concept of equilibrium funding: making strategic investments in buildings to maintain or improve the overall value of campus facilities. Reinvestment protects the condition and manages the cost of upkeep and, in some cases, eliminates a maintenance backlog. These investments include projects from room upgrades and mechanical replacements, up to comprehensive renovation of existing buildings.
2. Student Center/Dining Commons
  - a. Siting of the project is part of the campus framework plan, leading to the Greenway dorms and Science Center. The Merrill site was identified as ideal for a new student center, to address the most important campus needs and completing the Greenway vision. The college selected architects Herzog & de Meuron, who are known for modern design, and creating functional and sustainable space.
  - b. Jim reviewed renderings of campus approaches and preliminary schematics, highlighting adjacencies of various functions and spaces. The design approach will reuse the lower two levels of the Merrill structure. Repurposing the existing structure minimizes the environmental impact of the project. Additional structure will be built from massed timber.
  - c. Jaden raised two student concerns. First, with two functions in one building, will the design be able to accommodate the needed capacity. Yes, combining dining and student center consolidates energy in one space and each function will support the other. The plans include a direct path to dining from both building entrances, for capacity and circulation. In addition, and as an example, Val has 700 seats while the current design of the new building has 900, and increases the square footage per seat.  
Second concern, related to the further out dorms, is how to address student needs with the greater distance involved. This is a culture change which at first will seem less convenient, and over time will become reasonable.
  - d. Andrew asked about a planned faculty dining option noting that Lewis-Sebring dining was scaled back in recent years. There was a decline in Lewis-Sebring numbers with more faculty visiting Val to engage with students informally. The design for the new space is flexible and will adjust to program needs.

- e. Jill asked where the Center for Environmental Sustainability will be in the building. Currently the college has a conceptual plan, specific locations are to be determined.
3. Lyceum Project, 197 South Pleasant Street
  - a. The building undergoing conversion and expansion is a historic Greek revival home. Conversion preserves and expands an architectural gem to support college program. The Lyceum project will expand the academic footprint of the college.
  - b. Work is donor funded, and interdisciplinary within the humanities. It will meet the program needs for CHI, space for classes, and faculty offices for the History department.
  - c. The project design is nearing completion, and will go out for bidding. The site is currently being prepared and construction will start around early March.
  - d. Allie asked about the sustainability of the building materials. The project makes use of an existing building, with new structure built from massed timber, which is sustainable. There will be a “hyper efficient” building envelope, a solar roof, and reclaimed granite for facing the additions.
4. Climate Action Plan (CAP)
  - a. The CAP project will construct a heat pump energy center to more efficiently heat and cool college buildings, powered by renewable electricity. Requires new piping, the energy center, geothermal exchange wells, and enhanced building envelopes to replace steam distribution with lower temperature water.
  - b. The CAP is in the schematic design phase, and the college is engaging a construction manager for cost estimating. Costs will be higher than originally projected. Primary factors are the pandemic supply premiums, demand for these types of adaptations, plus the complexity of campus including a tangle of dense underground utilities.
  - c. While the budget is higher, the commitment to decarbonize campus by 2030 remains in place. A design review by an independent third party has recommended alternate strategies. As a result, the college has postponed installing the low temperature hot water underground piping to spring 2023 to consider these.
  - d. Geothermal has the highest level of efficiency, however over the past three years, there have been positive developments in the efficiency of air sourced heat pumps.
  - e. Jill asked if any consideration has been given to combining geothermal with air sourced heat pumps to get to 100%, and if AC is on track to be carbon neutral in 2030. The first task is establishing the low temp hot water network, without the inherent losses (30-35%) of the steam system. The college is taking a year to get it right.
  - f. Jill further asked how facilities might effectively communicate how decisions were going to be made during the one-year delay, in terms of carbon/cost curves and any adjustments to the overall commitment moving forward.
5. Thinking five or more years out, the campus framework architects are planning options for future uses of Keefe, Valentine, and Chapin. Identified needs are faculty offices and enhanced academic spaces, with improved accessibility. Plans will be shared with the community as they develop.
6. CPR thanked and congratulated Jim on his upcoming retirement.
7. CPR approved the minutes from November 16.

Adjourned 9:05 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
S Hegarty