Professional and Graduate Student Coordinating Committee

Minutes of Meeting December 15, 2010

Present: Dean Richard J. Smith, Committee Chair; Patricia Olynyk, Art; Joseph Fox, Business; Beth Schnettler, Engineering; Janet Bolin, Law; Leslie Kahl, Medicine; Barbara Barrow, Grad A&S; Oyinade Ogenbekun, Business; Fei Yi, Engineering; Maddie Carson, Social Work; Michael Abramson, GPC President, ex officio; Melissa Holtmeyer, Graduate Student Rep. 2010-2011 W.U. Board of Trustees, ex officio; Drew Gulick, Graduate Student Rep. 2010-2011 W.U. Board of Trustees, ex officio; Associate Dean Elaine Berland, ex officio

Guests: Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration Hank Webber and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Real Estate and Off-Campus Housing Mary Campbell

Absent: Peter MacKeith, Architecture; Karen Acton, Social Work; Lauren Pressler, Art; Tammi Cooks, Medicine

The meeting was called to order by Dean Richard J. Smith, Committee Chair, on December 15, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. in The Liberman Graduate Center Conference Room, Room 300 Danforth University Center.

Welcome and Introductions/Report of Committee Chair

Dean Richard J. Smith, Committee Chair, welcomed Hank Webber, Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Mary Campbell, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Real Estate and Off-Campus Housing as guest presenters to the Committee.

Minutes

The Committee considered and approved the Minutes of the October 12, 2010 meeting of the Professional and Graduate Student Coordinating Committee.

Update on graduate/professional student housing survey and future plans

Note: Due to the importance of this topic and presentation and discussion, the Committee agreed to move agenda items 4 and 5 to the next ProGradS meeting.

Webber and Campbell presented key findings from the Graduate and Professional Student Housing Survey conducted in March 2010, discussed next steps and raised items for further discussion (handout). The purpose of the survey was to assess the demand, needs and preferences for graduate and professional student housing and to test-market new and rehabilitated housing options. The survey response rate was 50% for the six schools that participated; 28% were non-US country of origin, and this percentage rose to 47% for Quadrangle residents. The most highly ranked features in housing choice for 1st year (all schools had similar rankings) included time to reach academic destination, cost, safety of neighborhood, safety of building, and walking distance to destination on campus. Lowest ranked in importance were whether property was owned by W.U., whether there was outdoor space, whether the apartment was furnished or unfurnished, separation between home and school. Campbell noted that new or renovated housing needs to be a good value proposition and address themes of cost and safety.

Survey results have informed the process the University is undergoing to establish a comprehensive housing policy. Campbell outlined the University Housing Plan which includes

- considering future off campus development and redevelopment opportunities;
- repositioning existing real estate assets; and
supporting efforts to make the communities surrounding the University attractive, safe and vibrant mixed use neighborhoods.

The Housing Plan for Quadrangle will
- reduce the number of buildings in Quadrangle’s portfolio;
- retain the balance of units for student housing and renovate buildings over time;
- contribute to community development plan in neighborhoods including retail initiatives, security, schools and community organizing.

Campbell indicated that all components are being implemented simultaneously over a period of years.

Webber asked the Committee for input on the following items for further discussion:
- Do we need to think about an institutional ‘safety net’ for our most vulnerable graduate and professional students?
- Affordability issue. Quadrangle does provide an affordable housing option close to campus for those students with limited resources. If we ‘shrink’ the portfolio and renovate the balance, are we forcing students of limited means into the open market? Is this okay?
- Specialized needs of international students. Do we need to discuss providing more support for graduate and professional students who are new to the United States? Do they need a more intensive orientation, at a minimum, and potentially more services provided for them or on their behalf?
- Are there housing services needed by our students that the University does not provide?

He noted that these are important decisions that most likely will require university subsidy, and decisions by Deans about what their priorities are.

Discussion included questions about the needs of international graduate students (How dependent are international graduate students on Quadrangle? What percentage of Quadrangle apartments are rented by international graduate students? Where are international graduate students getting housing? ). Committee Chair Smith noted that international graduate students say “I am coming to Washington University” compared to domestic students who say they “I am moving to St. Louis”; international students care about whether an apartment is WU-owned because they are not familiar with U.S. housing and look to the University to help them. Also discussed were short-term ways to improve the situation: Enhance communication, advising, orientation about housing for new students; show progress in improvements on regular basis and communicate to students; publicize services such as Campus 2 Home Shuttle.

Interest was expressed in exploring several different housing options: furnished low-cost, dormitory-style group housing close to campus and housing services which might address needs of new 1st year students, specifically international students; Affinity Housing with the Law School, per the survey results; housing for students with families, and housing designed to be on the affordable side of market.

Committee Chair Smith recommended that the ProGradS Committee meet early in the spring semester to discuss the questions raised for a possible follow-up report to Webber; the Committee members agreed. It was also decided that Executive Vice Chancellor Webber and Assistant Vice Chancellor Campbell be invited annually to present updates on the status of graduate and professional student housing to the ProGradS Committee.
Review and approval of Spring 2011 Nominating Process for selection of Graduate Student Representatives to the W.U. Board of Trustees 2011-2012

Associate Dean Elaine Berland reviewed the proposed dates of the 2011 selection process and the proposed timeline with Committee members. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the nominating process and timeline as presented.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Berland, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Graduate School