

3-25-2014

Steering minutes 03/25/2014

Steering Committee

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Recommended Citation

Steering Committee, "Steering minutes 03/25/2014" (2014). *Steering Committee*. 14.
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MINUTES
of the
Planning Committee
Tuesday, April 22, 2014 Meeting

Present: Jon Anderson, Jane Kill, Jordan Wente, Jim Barbour, Jim Hall, Michael Eble, Julie Eckerle, Arne Kildegaard

1. Minutes approved unanimously (4/1/14; 4/15/14)
2. The chair read the list of issues which Planning pledged (in our review of the 2006 strategic plan) to take up at greater length:
 - i) Achieve and maintain a student body of 2100
 - ii) Improve retention
 - iii) Maintain at least 85% tenure-track positions
 - iv) Renovate Briggs Library
 - v) Renovate and modernize other buildings

We have spent the last several meetings on (i). The chair will write a summary report, inviting input but also allowing space for dissenting views. The report will be written after the semester ends. The committee is comfortable with this end-game. A work-in-progress final report has been shared on google-drive.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of major renovation and upgrade priorities. Should the highest priority be Phase 1 of the Briggs Library renovation, or classroom and office space renovation of the Humanities building? Other very important renovations include Camden (accessibility, climate control), and Education (accessibility, climate control), but the committee considers these secondary. PE Center renovation is also a clear need, but can't trump teaching (Anderson). There might be a Title IX imperative for PE Center renovation (Mattson).

Renovation of Humanities emerged as the committee's unanimous top priority. Teaching and learning is the most fundamental aspect of the UMM mission (Kildegaard, Eckerle), and the noisy, uncomfortable spaces in this building are clearly substandard (Eckerle, Hall), in both a relative and an absolute sense (Eckerle). Faculty/student interaction in offices and classrooms is clearly impaired by poor climate control issues (Anderson). Eckerle has recently read the Humanities Division teaching evaluations, which indicate high levels of student dissatisfaction with the classroom spaces in Humanities.

Briggs Library is next in line for capital improvements. Fire suppression and accessibility were raised as significant issues. The programmatic advantages of improved library facilities are widely appreciated. After library renovation, issues of accessibility and climate control for Camden and Education may be addressed. No priority was established among renovation of these two buildings and of the PE Center.

It was agreed that the chair would write a memo to VC Rasmussen, communicating the Planning Committee's priorities for capital projects.

This will be the final meeting of the semester for the Planning Committee.

Adjourned, 11:40 a.m.