Minutes: February 9, 2011

Attending: Vincent Andrews, Sarah Bennedsen, Joe Burke, Casey Carr, Amanda Carreiro, Derek Chang, Lynnett Chappell-Williams, Christopher Clarke, Ken Clarke, Janet Corson-Rikert, Linda Croll Howell, David Delchamps, Deborah Durnam, Greg Eells, Rebecca Etim, Kappy Fahey, Mary Beth Grant, Tanni Hall, Anthony Hay, Christine Holmes, William Horning, Kent Hubbell, Douglas Kim, Katherine Kim, Michel Louge, Tim Marchell, Beth McKinney, Sarah Meyer, Sharon Mier, Susan Murphy, Kirsten Post Eynav, Lisa Ryan, Lisa Shaffer, Janet Shortall, Bob Smith, Janis Talbot, Catherine Thrasher-Carroll, Shawkat Toorawa, Don Viands, Lauren Wetterhahn, Tow Yau, Kathy Zoner

Upcoming meetings: March 30, 2011

Welcome and Introductions: Susan Murphy

1. Cornell is coming up on the one-year anniversary of last spring’s deaths. As we take stock of the many ways we have responded to create a campus environment where students can live well and learn well, we also need to consider what this anniversary may mean to various groups on campus.

2. During the meeting we received an overview of the newly updated Mental Health Framework that was developed to capture what we have accomplished since last spring, as well as address the challenges set forth by President Skorton in his Cornell Sun editorial “The Way Forward.” Secondly, Andrew Magre, Associate University Architect gave a progress report on the “Long-term Bridge Means Restriction Study” and spoke about the next (pre-schematic design) phase.

Overview of the Mental Health Framework: Tim Marchell

1. Cornell has revised the Mental Health Framework (previously known as the ‘candy corn’ diagram) by using the Jed Foundation’s Framework for Developing Institutional Protocols for the Acutely Distressed or Suicidal College Student, as a model. Attached is a copy of a presentation (pdf) that reviews the seven areas of focus as seen below.
2. The activities described in each area are meant to offer examples of current efforts that fall within that focus area. There are countless other programs, services, events, etc. that also could be listed and many of the approaches/strategies named could be placed in more than one focus area.

3. Council members were asked if this new framework captured all that we are doing. Here are some of the comments that were offered:
   - The area “Foster a healthy educational environment” seems to represent the work of faculty who are looking at modifying policies that impact students. Some of the policy changes currently under consideration include:
     - Calendar Committee is looking at the timing and length of breaks.
     - The Educational Policy Committee is developing a resolution that addresses assignments over breaks.
     - Laura Brown and the Associate Deans have completed a review of undergraduate advising and a report is available on that.
     - The Faculty Senate has received resolutions from the Student Assembly and the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly to consider a range of practices and policies.
   - How is the new framework a change? Are we making progress where it really matters?
     - Promoting life skills / resilience and a healthy educational environment are unique perspectives and not included in the Jed Foundation framework. Before the student suicides last year, many of us probably hadn’t thought about these areas as being so important.
     - This is a very positive way to look at how we are responding and should be shared with others across our campus.
     - When looking at the wheel in clockwise direction, it leads very nicely from macro to micro strategies ending with means restriction.
     - How does alcohol abuse fit into this model? What other forms of harm could be addressed?
   - Should alcohol abuse be named specifically in this model?
     - If the area addressing means restriction, were re-titled “Restrict Access to Means of Harm to Self and Others” it could be broadened to include alcohol abuse along with other forms of harm. A student commented that changes being made to the Greek rush system are essential if you want to address alcohol abuse. He cited observations made in the halls during the new member recruitment period and the number of students being referred to BASICS for education.

4. Tim Marchell asked for ideas on how to best communicate with other members of our community how “restricting access to means of suicide” is an integral component of any suicide prevention framework and approach to campus mental health.
   - It will be a challenging to name all the strategies used in each of the topic areas in a succinct amount of time.
   - It was suggested to present this information to the assemblies so they could help “get the word out” to their constituencies.
   - Cornell Minds Matter’s (CMM) advisor, suggested that this could be a topic at the next “Dining with Diverse Minds” student dinner. Susan Murphy and Tim Marchell were asked if they would be keynote speakers to open discussion during the dinner. The CMM sponsored dinner held last week was filled to capacity with about 100 students turned away.
   - Others suggested placing the framework on the Cornell Caring Community Web site or Gannett’s web site so others could refer to this link for information.
Update on Pre-Schematic Progress with the Long-term Bridge Means Restriction Study: Andrew Magre

1. Since last August, NADAAA (the Boston-based Architectural firm) has completed the assessment and research phase of the study including: site analysis, a technical and Cornell literature review, and meetings to garner public input and feedback from stakeholder groups such as the Campus Planning Committee, Friends of the Gorge student group, DEA Safety class, GPSA, EA, SA and the City/Cornell Means Restriction Committee. Existing conditions of the 7 bridges were documented and analyzed for precedents.

2. During the study process, various innovative fabrication techniques have been reviewed as conceptual options for each type of bridge; and a timeline has been created for development of the options for the structural typologies of each bridge. Materials reviewed included glass/acrylic, wire, tensile steel mesh, netting for underneath a bridge, bar fencing and other fencing options. Software is being used to understand the static ergonomics of each design/material and the human body.

3. Over the next few weeks, the pre-schematic design phase will begin to develop three potential designs for each of the three types of bridges. Analysis will include what’s doable from a design and technical perspective along with what is affordable. The goal is to look at all the possibilities and then narrow down the design selections in March. Costs will be a factor that may preclude some of the designs.

4. During March, the campus and city communities will be asked for their input and feedback on the pre-schematic design options. In addition to involving key stake holder groups in this discussion, it was suggested that members serve as “Council Ambassadors” to help carry key messages about the effectiveness of means restriction in preventing suicide and to help others recognize where means restriction fits in the overall campus mental health framework.

5. Council members are reminded to share their suggestions and comments on bridge designs at: http://meansrestrictionstudy.fs.cornell.edu/. Comments are welcomed at any time.

Minutes taken by Janis Talbot