ISC Meeting

April 4, 2011

In attendance: Jane Miller (chair), Jack Ahern (IPO), Stephen Forrest (Asian Languages), Nigar Khan (Graduate school), Guy Lanza (Environmental Sciences), Howard Peelle (Education), Michael Coblyn (Art), Russ Tessier (Elec./Comp. Engr), Peter Starr (Library), Thor Tillberg (undergraduate), Erika Schluntz (IPO), Nate Therien (Five Colleges, Inc.)

Guests: David Buchanan (Public Health), Ed Fersze (Provost’s Office), Valerie Kurka (CIE)

The meeting was called to order at 4:05.

The minutes from March 7, 2011 were approved unanimously.

COPE report (Stephen Forrest): An exchange agreement between University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMA) and Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University (NovSU) was presented to the ISC for review and approval. Dr. David Buchanan from Public Health was present to answer questions. Dr. Buchanan explained that the proposed exchange is part of a larger grant that is focused on global health issues. Our state representatives send delegations to Russia each year and this is one of the projects that derived from this relationship. Nate Therien asked if students from the five colleges would be eligible to participate in the program. Dr. Buchanan said they would be eligible, but UMass students would be given priority status. The proposed exchange was approved unanimously.

Vice-Provost and IPO Director, Dr. Jack Ahern, reported that there were two more international exchanges in the pipeline. He also announced that there is a search underway for an advisor for short-term programs. In preparation for strategic planning, Dr. Ahern raised the question about what it means to “internationalize.” A discussion ensued about the possibility of allowing for virtual exchanges. Nate Therien indicated that faculty have become more excited about contextualizing their work internationally. Dr. Ahern noted that the Mellon Foundation has put out a call that would encourage liberal arts and professional school partnerships. He noted that collaboration among the Five Colleges would be helpful in this regard. Finally, Dr. Ahern is putting together some ideas for faculty internationalization grants. He would like to have ISC assistance in articulating the purpose of the program and setting standards for review. He indicated that he would have something more detailed for the May meeting. Finally, Dr. Ahern indicated that he would like to bring more visibility for our international activities. In particular, he would like to find a systematic way for collecting and sharing our campus stories. He also envisions awards for exemplary achievements in internationalization.

Nigar Khan (Graduate School) announced that the graduate school will hold its first international affinity dinner that will focus on Brazil. Khan also announced that Dean Mullin has appointed a Graduate School staff member to contact NEASC regarding international dual degrees. She
added that within the New England universities, the University of Vermont does award dual PhD degrees through a program known as Conjoint Doctoral Degree program. This gives us hope in our negotiations with NEASC.

Ericka Schluntz (IPO) announced that ten students in the Tokyo area had been brought back to the U.S. in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami. She announced that the student insurance worked well in bringing students home. Finally, she noted that there are four students still in Japan and one student in Syria (a source of concern because of the unrest there).

The meeting adjourned at 5:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Miller