

Annual Report UWW Committee, 2007-2008

In 2007 - 2008, the UWW Committee held 14 meetings, including one business meeting.

The Committee reviewed 30 degree programs. Three final project revisions were also reviewed.

The Committee recommended to the Faculty that 26 students receive the Bachelor of Arts degree and 16 students receive the Bachelor of Science degree.

During the academic year, the committee approved 25 online course, 2 on campus seminars, and 2 courses delivered in Antigua

At the September business meeting, Jim Kennelly was introduced as the Interim Director of UWW (with a term of office from August 23, 2007 – May 30, 2008). Jim explained that while waiting for the Special Programs Study Group report he was beginning to work with UWW staff on many fronts—administrative, organizational and structural. Jim’s goals were to increase the number of qualified students, to build relationships with Skidmore faculty, and to better integrate UWW with the rest of the college. Jim also proposed that over the course of the year, members of the UWW committee consider how to be more effectively and efficiently involved with UWW student programs. The operating code was approved for 2007-2008. UWW’s mission statement was approved “for now” with the understanding that there may need to be changes made as soon as the SPSG Report is released.

The Special Programs Study Group was received in November 2007 and discussed at subsequent meetings in November and December. In the report, the SPSG stated that UWW was a unique characteristic of Skidmore College, providing an important contribution to the college’s identity. Consequently, the committee was cautiously optimistic that ongoing efforts to improve the academic rigor of the UWW program and to correct some longstanding organizational and fiscal difficulties would ensure the continuation of UWW in the future.

However, on March 6, 2008, VPAA Susan Kress and Interim Dean of Special Programs Jeff Segrave announced to the UWW staff and the UWW committee the recommendation to close the program. Conversations in following meetings then centered on developing an appropriate plan to “teach out” currently enrolled students while the program was phased out over the next 1-3 years.

After three months of spirited conversation throughout the college, the faculty voted to reject the administration’s proposal to terminate the UWW program at the May 2008 faculty meeting. Shortly thereafter, two UWW Working Groups were formed and given the following charge:

To develop a plan for a restructured University Without Walls Program that must address the serious issues of academic credibility, administrative transparency and efficiency, and financial accountability. It must be understood that we are not able to add new faculty lines to support this program and that if new resources are directed to UWW they must be redirected from somewhere else at the College.

The first working group is responsible for developing the academic program for the restructured UWW. The second working group must provide a business plan that puts the UWW program on a sound financial basis, covering direct costs within 2-3 years and indirect costs within 3-5 years.

A final report of these workings groups is due on September 1, 2008. Analysis of proposals in the Report (President's Cabinet, VPAA Senior Staff, SP Directors, DOF Staff, Academic Staff, CEPP, CAPT, FEC, IPPC) will be undertaken by September 30, 2008 and distributed to the faculty for discussion at the October or November 2008 faculty meeting, and to the Board of Trustees for discussion at their October 2008 meeting.

Respectfully,

Sheldon Solomon (Chair)
Mary DiSanto-Rose
Linda Hofmann
Bob Turner
Tim Harper