

FACULTY MEETING
February 27, 2009

JOINT CEPP-IPPC MOTION ON UWW

MOVED: That the faculty recommend to the administration that Skidmore terminate its University Without Walls (UWW) program, and that the process of termination extend for a reasonable period of transition to allow currently enrolled students to complete their degree requirements.

RATIONALE

The UWW program has been the subject of study for several years, as the College has attempted to address critiques of the program and respond to the serious challenges facing it. These critiques and challenges are identified in the program's own self-study report issued in June 2006; the charge to the Special Programs Study Group (SPSG), January 2007; the review of the UWW program conducted by external consultants, April 2007; and the report of the SPSG, October 2007. After assessing feedback from the College-wide discussions of the SPSG report, the VPAA, with the endorsement of the President's Cabinet, made a recommendation to close the UWW program in March 2008, seeking the advice of FEC with respect to moving the recommendation through the shared governance system. FEC advised that CEPP should take up the matter.

In April 2008, CEPP brought to the faculty a motion to terminate UWW, a motion that was narrowly defeated. That vote occurred in the context of an understanding—as expressed by the VPAA and CEPP—that the program could not continue in its current form because of its serious academic, administrative, and financial challenges. These challenges were reiterated in the VPAA's charge to the University Without Walls Working Group (UWWWG), which undertook the task of developing a plan for a restructured UWW program.

CEPP and IPPC have carefully studied the UWWWG report and acknowledge that its proposed academic program is more rigorous and more fully integrated with the College's residential program. However, the proposed model is also more costly in terms of faculty time and commitment and makes significant continuing demands on the College's financial resources. CEPP and IPPC agree with the majority of the UWWWG members that the proposed model is not feasible and that it represents "an inappropriate allocation of institutional resources particularly in this time of economic uncertainty and volatility" (UWWWG report, p. 32). Further, CEPP and IPPC have reached this conclusion recognizing that UWW was approved in the early 1970s with the explicit agreement (by the faculty, administration, and the Board of Trustees) that the program be self-supporting.

CEPP and IPPC unanimously conclude that, as a matter of educational and institutional policy, the continuation of the UWW program is not in the College's best long-term interests. Closing UWW, while painful and difficult, is appropriate and responsible.

CEPP and IPPC offer this joint recommendation with the understanding that, if the decision is made to close the UWW program, the College will be committed to celebrating the accomplishments of UWW and its graduates and to honoring the work of the many longtime and dedicated faculty and staff members who have devoted themselves to the program.