University Space Priorities Working Group
Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: January 22, 2013

Members in attendance: Barbara Albrecht, Robert Berne, John Billings, Corey Blay, Sewin Chan, Allyson Green, David Engel, Allyson Green, Wen-Jui Han, Angela Kamer, Marty Kurth, Ted Magder (chair), Laurence Maslon, Panos Mavromatis, Tony Saunders, Rosemary Scanlon, Andrew Schotter, Jalal Shatah, Matt Stanley, David Vintinner, Malina Webb (for Mariam Ehrari) Larry White, Diane Yu

Members unable to attend: Mary Cowman, James Jacobs, Perri Klass, Tony Movshon

1. Call to order and announcements

2. Consultation with faculty, students, administrators, and the external community

As part of the Working Group’s ongoing efforts to consult and communicate with the broader community, members reviewed a proposed message to the entire NYU community and discussed edits and changes.

[A final version of the message to the Community was sent on January 30, 2013 and is available at: http://www.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu/spacePriorities/documents/USPWG_UpdateMemo_01.30.13.pdf]

A plan to contact departments across the University, including in particular departments that submitted resolutions regarding the NYU Core Plan last Spring, was proposed. Members noted that many faculty members across departments are eager to discuss the Plan with the Working Group. Some members expressed concerns that certain groups, including those without clear departmental affiliations, may not be as easily accessible. Members agreed that they should work through the representative councils (FSC, AMC, SSC) to reach these constituents. The Group agreed that individual communications from Chair Ted Magder would be sent out to the chairs of each of the aforementioned departments, offering to meet with them and/or the faculty in their departments. The purpose of these meetings will be to update interested constituents on the progress of the Working Group’s deliberations and to answer any questions they may have.

3. Review of departmental resolutions
A summary highlighting the main points of the resolutions passed by departments last year was circulated. Members noted the common language and identified the following common themes of concern expressed:

- Financial risk
- Transparency and consultation with faculty
- Quality of life (including effects on recruitment, retention, and public space)
- Cost of tuition
- Academic mission of the University
- Enrollment pressures
- Relationship with external Community

The members discussed if and how each of these areas was being met by past, current, or planned Working Group activities, and agreed that each of these areas will be addressed in the final report. One member raised a question about efforts to engage the external community, which was tabled for the next meeting.

4. Discussion of sub-committees

The Working Group agreed to form three subcommittees as follows:

- Academic and non-Academic Space
- Finance
- Quality of Life

5. Discussion of University responses to requests for information

Members first discussed the University’s response to the request for clarification of its charge, in which the Group inquired as to whether they could consider making a recommendation of no development on the southern superblock. In response, the University stipulated that the Working Group can pursue the “full range of options” when making its recommendations and itemized the elements of reasoned justification that would be necessary to support such a recommendation. Members concluded that the University’s response had provided greater clarity regarding the Working Group’s charge. The Working Group now understands that it may recommend no development on the southern superblock, keeping in mind that such a recommendation, like any recommendation that it might make, will require explanation.

Of particular interest and discussion, was the stipulation that the special permit to build granted by ULURP would lapse if construction has not commenced ten years following the conclusion of any relevant litigation. The building obligation is considered met, members noted, if the School Construction Authority (“SCA”) decides to pursue a school on the Morton Williams site. The Group tabled the discussion of the remaining University responses to their questions until their next meeting.
6. Discussion of Community Space at #4 Washington Square Village

The Working Group was asked by Vice President Alicia Hurley to comment on the proposed use of space on the Ground Floor of Washington Square Village #4 which is to be converted to community use by a non-profit organization. Following a brief discussion, the Working Group issued the following recommendation:

“The Working Group did not feel that it had sufficient information on the current availability or need for non-profit community services to render a final opinion, though many members did identify a pre-K daycare as one use that would likely address community needs.

“We encourage you to solicit comment from the neighboring community to ensure that the space is used in a manner that will benefit the public.

“We thank you for the opportunity to comment. We are certainly pleased that the university is moving forward with its commitment to provide for community use of space on the superblocks.”