At the invitation of President McCartney, Laura Katz and I had the opportunity to participate in a STEM Education Workshop hosted by the White House at the University of Colorado—Boulder in late September. This meeting built on the momentum of the White House’s January 2014 College Opportunity Summit during which President McCartney announced Smith’s STEM Posse initiative.

At the workshop last month, Laura and I heard from and spoke with national institutional leaders in the effort to welcome and support all students in the sciences. The room was abuzz with heady conversations about how to sustain and support access and excellence in STEM undergraduate education. These collective conversations identified many ways to transform our pedagogies and disciplines, by creating a common vision of STEM education within a college; supporting teaching excellence through incentive and institutional structures; systematically integrating change efforts within an institution; developing sustainable funding models for students’ education; and building communities within and across institutions.

In the weeks following the STEM Workshop, Science Planning hosted a series of open meetings for Division III faculty, staff, and students to discuss the draft of the strategic planning report, *Vision for the Future, 2015*, crafted by our summer working group. Our plan dovetails quite well with the White House’s own 5-year strategic plan to enhance the STEM experience for all students, especially in relation to shared calls for broad implementation of evidence-based pedagogies as well as expanded opportunities for relevant and authentic learning and research experiences for students. Science Planning is working to revise our report to reflect the feedback we received and a final draft of it should be ready before Thanksgiving.

Talking in Boulder as well as with our own faculty, staff, and students solidified my pride about the ways in which Smith has already distinguished itself with its effective and innovative pedagogies and programming. I feel confident that our strategic planning report yielded future directions that will build on our successes as well as the best thinking in the field. I look forward to partnering with you to make this vision a reality.

--Patty DiBartolo
Faculty Director
FELLOWSHIPS UPDATE

We are in the midst of identifying our student nominees for the Goldwater and Udall Scholarships, as well as the HHMI’s Exceptional Research Opportunities Program (EXROP). Thank you to the faculty members who have agreed to provide brief recommendations for our internal nomination process and to help mentor our nominees.

In September, the Clark Science Center Distinguished Fellowships and Scholarship Committee (see sidebar for membership) met for the first time. The committee focuses on competitions that are not coordinated by other campus offices, but offer either highly prestigious early career awards (including the Goldwater, and Udall Scholarships) or graduate school opportunities to our Div. III students (including the Churchill Scholarship).

The committee will also act as an advisory resource for faculty, staff, and students about how to best promote and support Div. III students who seek other competitive opportunities during undergraduate study (including summer programs such as NIST SURF and Amgen Scholars, as well as – if our July proposal for support is successful (and we got past the first stage!) - the Beckman Scholars Program) and for postgraduate study (including NSF Graduate Fellowships; Rhodes, Marshall, and Gates Scholarships; and Fulbright study/research grants). (Note: Rhodes, Marshall, and Fulbright require Smith College nomination and our prospective nominees are supported through the processes of the Fellowships Program in the Class Deans Office.)

SCIENCE CENTER PROJECTS WITH FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Many thanks to our colleagues at Facilities for their help resolving two longstanding issues of concern to the science community at Smith:

- We are pleased to announce that architects and planners are at work on a replacement roof plan for McConnell Hall. The project—to begin this spring—also involves an improvement long in the planning: a new retractable dome cover for one astronomy shed. Soon, astronomy students, faculty, and friends will be able to see more of the night sky and McConnell will have a tighter skin and drier interior. Many thanks to new Associate Vice President for Facilities Management Roger Mosier and his team for devising a way to bring together these two project elements together!

- For the past few months, the Sabin-Reed-McConnell walkway has been decorated with semi-transparent design samples. The film is designed to reduce bird strikes, a long-standing concern in the Science Center. Past attempts (the decals) to make our walkways friendly to birds were unsuccessful. Recent research on successful bird strike reduction film informs our choices of samples and Campus Planning Committee will choose the design for the walkway.

—Margaret Lamb, Administrative Director

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

November 3, 2014      Student application deadline to be Smith nominees for Goldwater and Udall
November 10, 2014     Faculty recommendations for Goldwater and Udall candidates due

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