

Student Life Committee, End of Year Report, May 5, 2003

Members: Kris Bartanen, Heather Douglas, Keith Ferguson (student), Betsy Gast (chair), Duane Hulbert, Diane Kelley, Kurt Walls, Carrie Washburn

The committee met fourteen times during the 2002-2003 school year to address the following charges (revised in SLC minutes of Oct.30):

1. Give comments on the revised Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.
2. Continue to give suggestions on the Conspiracy of Hope project.
3. Hear from Monica Nixon about the "Safe Streets" block party and improving off-campus student/neighbor relations.
4. Hear from a range of students living on-campus to gain their perspectives on their experiences in campus residences and with campus security.
5. Communicate with appropriate offices to streamline the recommendation process to which faculty-members contribute for R.A.s, Peer Advisors, Orientation Leaders, *Trail* editor, theme houses, etc. One goal is to make routine recommendations less burdensome for the faculty. The SLC may want to consider whether recommendation forms might be simplified.
6. Explore ways of encouraging campus conversations aimed at promoting greater responsibility, accountability and civility on campus.

Charge #1 - There was no work forthcoming from ASUPS this year on the Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. The SLC continues to be available to review and respond as the document develops.

Charge #2 – The SLC made contact with student leaders letting them know we were available as consultants. The Conspiracy of Hope project proceeded to successful completion without committee involvement.

Charge #3 – We met in the fall with Associate Director for Student Services, Monica Nixon and Moriah Blake, a student intern in the Student Services office. Monica reported that plans to obtain permits from the city of Tacoma are in the works for a fall 2003 block party with the objective of building cooperative relationships between off-campus students and neighbors. The pros and cons of involving faculty members who live in the neighborhood as "hosts" for the block party was discussed. Moriah Blake stated that she thought students living off-campus are more interested in independence than anonymity and that most would willingly participate in block parties with neighbors. Monica also reported that a new campus-owned gathering place exists on North 11th St. specifically for off-campus students. The committee was given copies of the "Guide to Off-Campus Living" and the "Fall 2002 Survey of Off-Campus Students" with an invitation to make suggestions on either document. Approximately 37% of UPS students live off-campus (about 900). Kris Bartanen provided copies of the Student Affairs brochure, "Party Planning", for the committee's information. A spring workshop was planned for students on the protocol of hosting parties. We concluded that Monica

and her office were taking solid action on improving relations with students living off-campus and their neighbors.

Charge #4 – The committee’s primary focus of the year was charge #4. Initially discussion about the intention and viability of the charge led to its revision as written above. In efforts to inform ourselves, we wrote a list of questions for Todd Badham, director of Security Services, and invited him to two fall meetings to explain the multiple roles of Security Services, the policies governing Security personnel’s access to student residences on campus and the challenges in working with students. We learned that Security Services’ duties are vast and include evening escort service for students living within a mile and a half of campus, transport in cases where an injury (e.g. broken leg) requires temporary accommodation, and response to a range of emergencies including car trouble, medical assistance, and letting students into buildings.

We decided that the most efficient and effective way to “hear from a range of students living on-campus” was to invite students to two focus groups at the beginning of spring term led by SLC members and structured with a set of questions. A cross-section of students was represented: those living in dormitories, Greek houses, and university-owned houses, men and women, sophomores, juniors and seniors, in leadership roles and not. Though we had no freshman, Bartanen informed the committee that there are 1600 students living on campus, 624 of them being freshman, thus the majority of on-campus students are not freshman. The list of questions was asked of each group with no judgment or information given by the facilitators (Addendum #1).

We learned that many students have had positive experiences with assistance from Security Services personnel. For example, students seemed generally pleased with prompt, consistent response to requests for after hours access to the music building, gym and labs. Opinions were mixed on whether Security responds quickly enough in emergency or “lock-out” situations and students did not seem to know the policies on the “unlock” schedule. Many students do not know about the range of services provided or, because of inadequate or misinformation, perceive Security personnel to be in more of a policing role than a support role. For example, several students stated they would choose to call 911 or take an intoxicated student to the emergency room rather than call security personnel for fear of retribution. They did not seem to know that routing an emergency call through Security Services enables emergency personnel to reach a student in distress more swiftly and that the role of security personnel in such situations is to ensure the safety of students and to file a report if an integrity code violation has occurred. Students also stated that they did not have much of a relationship with Security personnel, especially the professional (non-student) staff so when they do interact, it is with some distrust.

Kris Bartanen provided us with results of the Residential Student Benchmarking Survey which showed that UPS students feel somewhat safer on campus, in their rooms and in residence halls than the national average. She also provided us with the university’s sexual harassment report from last year and samples of the kinds of response reports made by Security Services this year.

The committee was impressed with the breadth of services provided, the clear focus on student safety and the challenge of the multiple roles of Security Service personnel. In March we met again with Todd Badham to clarify some of the questions that arose from the focus groups and to discuss how best to improve students' perception of Security Services on campus. When asked if the staff has received any conflict resolution training, Todd explained that he has been working on it but it's difficult for his professional staff to participate in training together, because of their tight schedule. The committee recognizes the stress created by staffing constraints. It is worth noting that a professional staff person is on duty at all times. A list of the committee's recommendations have been forwarded to Todd (Addendum # 2).

We discussed the possible role of faculty is helping to dispel some of the myths surrounding Security Services and in discussing campus expectations with students. Our discussion opened the door to Charge #6.

Charge #5 – The process for faculty campus recommendations for student leadership positions was streamlined along with other campus recommendation processes in the fall term, so the committee decided that no action needed to be taken on that charge.

Charge #6 – Discussion on charge #6 did not begin in earnest until our second to the last meeting. We agreed, based on Douglas's clarification of the differences between a "civic" community and an "intellectual" community, that as an intellectual community, we hold to a higher standard of interaction on many levels: intellectual, behavioral and interactional. We began discussing ways the university currently models this or could increase this focus, for example, during Prelude students learn that they have more responsibility for their education and increased accountability to peers and faculty. We noted there could be more student advisory committees and need-based focus groups. Bartanen suggested possible models for structured conversations, such as the "Michigan Dialogue Model". Hulbert offered that talks that take place in student residences have a different level of discussion than those in academic buildings and suggested that having faculty present at these events would be beneficial. Ferguson recommended the idea of an "Alumni Hall of Fame" to highlight models of intellectual and civic accomplishment for current students, adding that distinguished alumni could be invited back to campus for talks and discussions.

The SLC concluded that clarifying the expectations for students as part of an intellectual community is important, therefore we would like to continue addressing this charge next year.

Suggested Charges for the 2003-2004 school year:

1. Continue to address charge #6: explore ways to encourage campus conversations aimed at promoting greater responsibility, accountability and civility on campus.
2. Give comments on the revised Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities
3. Examine sophomore programs, specifically support for the transitions particular to sophomore year.

4. Examine and suggest ways in which models of civic and/or intellectual accomplishment can be highlighted. (Standardizing the computer programs used in the various publicity offices may be helpful).
5. Explore the relationship of student life and Facility Services. (The suggestion was made that efforts of Facility Services are unappreciated by students.)

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Addendum #1

Questions asked at student focus groups held on January 28 and 29, 2003:

1. Why did you decide to come tonight?
2. How has security been helpful or not helpful?
 - a. What does security services do?
3. Do you remember how you learned of security services?
4. What impressions do you have of security services, positive or negative?
5. How do you view student security staff?
6. Would you ever consider working for security services?
7. What changes would you like to see in Security Services?

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Addendum #2

Date: April 30, 2003
To: Todd Badham, Director of Security Services
From: Student Life Committee, Betsy Gast, Chair
Re: Recommendations

Todd, at the end of this year of discussion with you and with students, the Student Life Committee would like to make the following recommendations aimed at improving campus relations and dispelling some of the misperceptions of the role of Security Services. We want to thank you for your help in this process and hope you find these suggestions useful.

- A **change of name** from Security Services to Campus Safety in order to emphasize the full range of responsibilities which Security Services offers in addition to policing responsibilities. The committee believes this may help bring into focus the other ways in which Security Services offers assistance to students.
- **Improve campus outreach.** Make a **personal connection** with students through avenues such as Orientation events at the beginning of the year and your planned participation in **crime prevention education** in the residence halls in the fall. The committee acknowledges the potential risk for persons responsible for enforcing rules and policies, such as Security Services, in creating a friendly relationship with those they regulate, but also recognizes the similar multiple roles of Student Development staff in befriending and regulating students. One concrete example might be developing your web site in a way that could foster a friendlier relationship to students.
- **Improve communication to students** regarding the “unlock” schedule. Recognizing that this is the kind of information that may need to be communicated more than once, we suggest that emails to the residential campus community or other forms of additional advertising could help. Another concrete area for improved communication is when students call with an emergency, to provide an expected time for response.
- **Creation of a Parking Appeal Board.** The committee supports your idea that faculty, staff and students could potentially sit on a board that hears appeals of those served with parking violations. A possible option for paying parking fines may be to donate points from students’ meal plans to various charities in the Tacoma area, similar to what Collins Memorial Library has offered students in order to pay overdue book fees. This charitable option would also be an appropriate manner in which students may engage in the activities of an Intellectual Community.

- Another option considered by the Student Life Committee, was the creation of a **Student Advisory Committee** that would make recommendations to Security Services. Some doubt the effectiveness and appeal of such a body while others think it may be a timely opportunity to create an invitation for greater dialogue which could better the relationship between Security Services and the student body. Furthermore, advising students could serve as virtual ambassadors to campus, more accurately representing Security Services. The committee suggests that students could be identified to participate by responding to an invitation from Security Services.
- **An open panel discussion** is also suggested as a potential way to give students a greater sense of ownership in Security Services. Different than the Student Advisory Committee, these open panel discussions would be a forum for discussion among interested parties, and therefore would not be the activity of a designated and committed group of members, as with the Student Advisory Committee. It was felt that discussions should be offered periodically throughout the year and would be most beneficial if they were open-ended and topical. The committee acknowledges the potentiality for one participant to monopolize the discussion with personal grievances but does not feel that such a potentiality was great enough to choose not to offer a panel discussion.
- While we understand that scheduling may be prohibitive given staffing constraints, the committee recommends that you continue your efforts to provide **conflict resolution training** for your staff.