

Student Life Committee Minutes October 24, 2001

Present: Kris Bartanen, Betsy Gast, Duane Hulbert, Diane Kelley, Carrie Washburn
Guest: Monica Nixon, Associate Director of Student Services

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 by Diane Kelley, chair. The assembled group introduced themselves to our guest, Monica Nixon, the Associate Director of Student Services, who has responsibilities for off-campus student programming and neighbor complaint resolution.

There were several suggestions for revisions for the Minutes of October 17. Once revised, they will be circulated and adopted at the next committee meeting.

D. Kelley reported that she still hasn't heard back from David Bahar, ASUPS President, about SLC's second charge: the Student Bill of Rights.

A student, Noelle DeHarpporte, has indicated she would like to sit on the committee as the ASUPS representative. She works in Monica Nixon's office and would be a good fit for the committee. She will be in touch with David Bahar to request appointment.

The meeting then turned to the topic for the day: off-campus students and neighbor relations. Monica Nixon started with a brief explanation of what services her office offers to off-campus students, to landlords, and to the neighborhoods in general. Essentially, the office is consolidating existing services for off-campus students (OCS) and expanding where there seems to be a need. Her office works with students who already live off-campus as well as those who want to move off-campus. Special attention was paid early this term to the 17 first-year students who are living off-campus.

In terms of relations with neighbors, Monica wants to pair services available through DSA with the complaint process. Off-campus students seem to want connection to the campus, yet at the same time they are seeking independence. The challenge for the OCS office is to design services and programs that appeal to them. Currently the new ASUPS student senator for off-campus students, a ASUPS committee that deals with off-campus concerns, and an off-campus student coordinator are meeting together to discuss how best to reach off-campus students. In addition the office is participating in a cost-of-living survey comparing on and off campus living costs.

Some creative programs have been mounted or suggested this Fall:

1. Blessing of the Animals (On Oct. 4, St. Francis of Assisi feast day). Many neighbors attended to this event. In addition to flyers in the neighborhoods, Monica invited the members of the North End Neighborhood Council.

2. An idea to have an equipment check-out for lawn and housecleaning equipment (mowers and vacuums).

The OCS website has received particular attention this fall. This newly-revised website functions as a resource for students, landlords, and neighbors. One major component is a listing of rental properties in the area. Right now the office is in the process of revising criteria for landlord listings and plans to start charging for the listing service. The funds generated will be used for OCS services.

The main focus so far this fall has been to increase the visibility of the office, so students take advantage of the services. Monica has sent out postcards to new OC freshmen, prepared a party-smart card that was distributed at the beginning of the year, and has produced a flyer for the Halloween weekend, noting area activities and reiterating the party-smart tips.

In addition the OCS office has been working with a committee to create a process of gathering accurate and timely addresses for off-campus students.

Monica indicated that she was open to assisting the SLC in its charge this year concerning relations with neighbors. A discussion ensued about ways to help students and their neighbors get acquainted; suggestions included block parties, potlucks on campus, pizza during finals week.

The office has sent one OCS newsletter and another will go out just after Thanksgiving. Committee members offered suggestions for articles: connecting with neighbors around the world situation, letting neighbors know that students will be away over break. Additionally Marilyn Bailey sends *Open Line* to neighbors living within a certain radius of campus to inform them of campus events, etc.

To the question of whether students could learn about landlords through a rating system, Monica Nixon responded that the OCS office addresses this concern from a slightly different direction by helping students become savvy renters. There is a concern that student evaluations for a particular landlord would be from only one group of students and would not necessarily be fair. The suggestion was made that perhaps over time a rating system for those landlords who were "excellent" might be developed from student ratings.

The project to list rental properties on the OCS website includes giving landlords questions to answer that will be part of the listing. The premise is that listing on the website is a privilege; landlords who do not answer the questions will not be listed.

The discussion then turned to how to pursue our charge (to "examine off-campus student/neighbor relations and recommend changes to policy and programs where appropriate") without replicating Monica's efforts. Possibilities suggested included 1) talking with the ASUPS OCS committee about what they see as policy issues, and 2) looking at the OCS website and making suggestions.

To the question of which policy areas it would make sense for the SLC to look at, Kris Bartanen responded that we may want to think about whether the current efforts are reasonable and suggest other things that might be done.

Kris Bartanen explained to the committee that Monica Nixon has a number of responsibilities in addition to the OCS program and the complaint process. She works with the Student Diversity Center, MIRAGE (mixed-race generation), the multicultural students program, assessment, the DSA website, among other things

Student Bill of Rights

Kris Bartanen reported that the Student Senate is about to make the Bill of Rights committee a *ad hoc* committee of the ASUPS. That committee is not quite ready to share their work yet. The impetus behind the Bill of Rights seems to be on securing protections for the future in areas such as confidentiality and freedom of ideas. The whole document does not revolve around the one article that speaks to off-campus behavior and the university's right to intervene. The discussion on the Bill of Rights, once it begins, has the potential to be very productive and interesting.

As the hour for adjournment drew near, the Chair dismissed the meeting with the suggestion that members look at the OCS website as homework for the next meeting (on November 14).

Respectfully submitted,
Carrie Washburn