

Minutes of the Student Life Committee
January 24, 2014

Present: Faculty Members Brad Reich, Lisa Fortlouis Wood, Mike Benveniste, Ben Lewin, David Latimer, Poppy Fry; Student Representatives Ryan Del Rosario, Max Estêvão; Library Liaison Eli Gandour-Rood; Associate Dean Lisa Ferrari; Dean Mike Segawa

Meeting was **called to order** at noon.

Wood called for announcements. She noted that student representative Jenica Holt would not be joining SLC meetings this semester.

Note that the committee persevered despite the fact that an alarm system in the building appeared to be undergoing some kind of test or malfunction, and an extremely loud and unpleasant beeping was emanating from the ceiling approximately every 45 seconds. Fortunately, this was resolved partway through the meeting, before the committee was driven to despair.

The minutes for December 5th were reviewed. No corrections were offered, and a motion to approve was seconded and unanimously **approved with one abstention**.

Business

Wood led the group in beginning a discussion around following up on the efforts of the SLC in Fall semester. She is in the process of completing a mid-year report of the action taken thus far, and so we briefly reviewed the work of the working groups from last semester.

Commencement Hall Working Group

There was general agreement that the focus group of last semester was very helpful, and that it would be useful to continue efforts to reach out to students and ask for their input. Segawa noted that his staff are moving on some of the action items identified to improve student life in Commencement Hall (supplying pots and pans for the kitchen, etc).

SLC Sexual Assault Working Group

There was discussion about approaching the faculty senate around the recommendation of the SLC SAWG to develop an ad hoc working group. Wood suggests that the issue be brought before the faculty senate for discussion, decision, and perhaps appointment of the ad hoc committee so that it could get stated before summer. Other committee members noted that there continues to be ongoing discussion in the faculty senate (and elsewhere on campus) about how to sustain momentum around this topic.

Segawa pointed out that the original Sexual Assault Working Group (whose work the SLC SAWG reviewed and commented on) is not dissolved, and will continue to be a standing group within student affairs. He also made it known that there will be staffing enhancement in student affairs in the sexual assault/violence area. Currently student affairs has a 10 month position which may be increased to 12 month, at which point that person could then spend the additional time working around sexual violence issues.

Wood asked for clarity around whether the recommendation from SLC SAWG is to enhancing the existing SAWG, or to establish a second group. Discussion suggested that it may be redundant to have two groups, but it is important to see how the existing group is going to move forward.

Reich agreed that it made sense not to rush into creating an additional group, and reminded the committee that the SLC SAWG recommended that the University (perhaps through the original SAWG) make decisions around the intended purpose of existing sexual assault policies. He noted that in future it might make the most sense to have a standing group and an oversight body, rather than convening additional ad hoc groups.

Wood then turned the discussion of the committee to the two original committee charges which had been tabled until spring:

- Monitor the work of the First Year Experience Task Force and provide feedback to the Dean of Students and to the Faculty Senate on its work.
- Evaluate and provide recommendations to the Dean of Students and the Faculty Senate regarding the Residential Seminar program

Segawa suggested bringing in Assistant Dean of Students Debbie Chee to give an update on the work of the First Year Experience Task Force, as his understanding is that their charge was to gather information and perspective on first year experience both nationally and here at UPS.

The committee agreed that was an excellent idea. Wood asked if it would be possible to get a written “executive summary” prior to Chee’s visit so that the committee could be prepared to engage with her.

Segawa then provided more context for the Residential Seminar charge, which is that this past semester, as for the past six years, UPS has run had 7-8 residential seminars (out of a total of around 40, and with a few control/comparison groups that had the same syllabus but no residential component). There is an interest from several quarters in increasing the number of these residential seminars. There are no current plans for this next fall, and any changes would need to go through the faculty, but there is interest.

Wood asked about existing assessment of these seminars, and Segawa noted that there will be student and faculty assessment but that it hasn’t been gathered yet. Present assessment effort is only within this year.

Lewin noted that it would be helpful to get some assessment and feedback from instructors and students who have participated in the seminars in past years.

Fry asked if the SLC might be able to combine these two charges into one, wondering whether they are in fact part of the whole...that is, whether residential seminars might be a large subset of the ‘first year experience ad hoc group’. She noted that perhaps if SLC were to hear from the first year experience ad hoc group first, it could determine the importance of addressing the second charge separately, or as a part of the first charge.

Reich asked whether an analogous program exists for transfer students and their ‘first year experience’?

Ferrari noted that we no longer have transfer seminars, and in the past when we did, they've never been residential.

Segawa added that UPS hasn't looked at the transfer experience with as much detail as we have the first-years, noting that, for instance, we've seen that students who transfer from other 4 year schools do well in terms of retention, but those from 2-year schools tend to do less well, but we haven't explored why.

Wood redirected the attention of the committee to looking at our process. She asked for thoughts about having one major charge as opposed to looking at three things this past fall. She asked what else members would like to see SLC doing in the spring? She noted a preference for looking to the future and plotting out some considered, specific charges for next year's committee.

Del Rosario pointed out that each working group in the fall spent time assessing what their charge meant, and that it would certainly be more efficient to do that in advance.

Fry noted that 2 out of the 3 groups came up with reports saying "there needs to be another group that does this!" and that perhaps that suggests that undertaking efforts more like that of the Commencement Hall group would allow SLC to have more effect.

Gandour-Rood wondered if it might be helpful for SLC to consider what issues are within our purview or areas of expertise, and consider request charges which intersect squarely with those areas, and about which committee members have useful things to say.

Ferrari noted an issue that she would like to see addressed is the UPS Summer Session. Specifically, the lack of on-campus housing for students in the summer, about which she's gotten mixed feedback about that. She noted that there is also a larger interest in summer session as an entire curricular model, but such a huge conceptual question that this might not be right for this committee.

Segawa noted that there are no logistical barriers to offering housing for summer students, other than the fact that the interest may not be there from either other areas on campus, or from students themselves, who typically find MUCH cheaper housing off campus.

Wood mentioned that she is more interested in academic issues and the development of our students, than logistics, but thinks it's very germane to the SLC to look at the large picture of the four year experience of our students.

Fry noted that a reconceptualization of what summer means to our campus is huge, likely quite tied to financial considerations, and perhaps way beyond the scope of the SLC.

Further discussion around evaluating Puget Sound's summer session noted that it would be important to consider the faculty's scholarly/developmental goals around the summer experience for our students, as well as assessing student preferences, and that such evaluation would need to be in concert with the curriculum committee.

Segawa then raised two potential other topics that SLC might want to address:

- There is an experiential learning group, as the president's cabinet is keenly interested in what Puget Sound is doing in that regard, and there is a direct connection between experiential learning and the work that happens in student life.
- Puget Sound as an institution has been trying to figure out how to improve the success of our marginalized students (primarily those students marginalized due to socioeconomic status or race). One thought has been to bring some students here early to prepare them for arriving at college, an idea which is coming out of admissions and our access programs and is still in very initial stages.

Wood brought this around to the general notion of talking about what the SLC can and should do and be capable of, noting that this could be a very effective committee if we talk about how our charges are framed.

Reich suggested splitting into three working groups: one to look at residential seminars, another for the first year experience, and a third to consider future charges for the SLC and how to frame them.

Fry asked whether we need to have a working group for residential seminars, as there isn't any information around that quite yet, adding that in the long term, the working group model is a good one, But it seems like the whole committee should be having some of the conversations, particularly around what the future work of this committee should be! Rather than having a working group looking at that, the whole group should look at it.

Wood suggested that working group could do preliminary work and that the substantive discussion could happen with the whole group.

Wood announced two working groups, then: one for looking at first year experience, and one for looking at charges.

- First Year Experience Working Group: Ben Lewin, Mike Benveniste, David Latimer, Eli Gandour-Rood.
- Charges group: Poppy Fry, Lisa Ferrari, Ryan Del Rosario , Brad Reich

Estevao offered to work with his coworkers to bring in representatives from student organizations and other spaces on campus that have a stake in the issues being discussed, which Wood acknowledged as an excellent plan. He will bring information to the next meeting.

Segawa noted that he will work on bringing Debbie Chee to the next SLC meeting on February 7th or if not, the one following.

Meeting **adjourned 1:02pm.**