Student Life Committee

Annual Report for 2003 - 2004

Members

Raymond P. Heath, (Chair), Barbara A. Hoffman, Thomas M. Jackson, Jacklyn R. Leitzel, Andrea K. Morrison, Julia Smith, Mary Alice Capezza, Elizabeth Dittrick, Meredith Force, Susan O'Hara and Sidney King.

Meetings

The Committee met twice and two meetings were postponed during the year.

General

The Student Life Committee advises the Vice President for Student Life on: policies outside of the classroom; services, activities and programs in the Student Life area; and, issues in the Student Life area that require attention or about which the Vice President seeks advice. Any Student Life policy, whether a revision or addition, must be submitted to the Student Life Committee in the form in which it is proposed to be published for consultation prior to inclusion in The Student Handbook.

The Committee is composed of 2 faculty appointed by the Faculty Senate, 4 students appointed by the Student Government Association, 2 graduate students appointed by the Graduate Student Council, the Dean of Students, 2 student life administrators and the Vice President for Student Life.

Activity - 2003-2004

The primary agenda items included: review of major developments in the Student Life Division during 2002-2003 with attention to the growth of the Academic Excellence Center and the Disabilities Services area, the IACS accreditation granted to the Counseling/Student Development Center, and the continued expansion of housing capacity and occupancy. Reactions to the new UNIV 100 Course were discussed. Some of the concerns shared were forwarded to Dr. Fedrick, Dr. Furmanski and Ms. Vladika for further attention. The fluctuating attendance at Family Weekend over the past few years also was reviewed. Student feedback suggested that the format should be revised.The schedule for 2004 will provide less structured time/activities and a few traditions of the weekend (i.e. parade of class floats and skits) will be replaced by programs intended to introduce families to the faculty, etc. of the 4-college organization. Student leaders questioned the system of cancellation of classes during inclement weather and recommended consideration of a "condensed" class scheduling approach. The grading system and some students' perceptions of inconsistent interpretation by faculty was described and forwarded to the Registrar. The need for individual faculty discretion with grading based on different forms of assessment in some disciplines and alternative approaches to performance evaluation was discussed as well. Before the first meeting, the graduate student member shared concerns about the lack of public telephones in some buildings and graduate students' support of a policy banning tobacco use on campus. After discussion, these concerns were forwarded to the responsible administrative offices.

Additional courtesy phones were installed for contacting Security/Safety and they were programmed with campus numbers to enable persons with phone cards to use those phones. The tobacco use policy and the discussions with the Board of Trustees and the University Health and Safety Committee during the previous year were clarified and described in detail. The University Clean Air Policy does not prohibit smoking or other tobacco use outdoors on campus. However, smoking is prohibited in all campus buildings, a slight change of the previous policy/practice in two residence halls. At the first spring meeting, the SGA leaders mentioned that a revised structure for their organization was under consideration and requested feedback. A draft proposal for a restructured SGA to create more leadership positions; to establish a programming intern model that would remove programming from the SGA's responsibilities; to enable the SGA to be linked more directly to the individual colleges; and, to increase its impact on a greater variety of governance issues was presented. The proposed restructuring was discussed at length and the consensus of the Committee was that the SGA should develop an organization model through which their work would be focused more directly on student issues/concerns they could influence. The liaison positions to the colleges were considered a positive new direction. The Committee chose to review the proposals further on its own and to vote electronically on the motion to endorse with the understanding that since the reorganization, if implemented, would result in a major change in the SGA's role, the Committee's recommendation should be forwarded to the President for a final review with the Cabinet when the revised constitution was completed. The Committee then endorsed the proposal unanimously and the Cabinet subsequently discussed the proposal with key student leaders. The revised constitution and election format was approved by the Cabinet

and implemented before the semester's end.

Conclusions

The Committee is pleased with its activity during 2003-2004. The restructured organization and new constitution of the Student Government Assocation is expected to enable the organization to become more directly involved in issues of greater importance to the students' total experience.

Submitted for the Committee

Raymond P. Heath, Chair
July, 2004