

COMMISSION on STUDENT AFFAIRS

March 19, 2009

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Brush Mountain Room
Squires Student Center

Minutes

Present: Davis Bailey, Paul Deyerle, Rick Ferraro, Lauren Keister for Monica Gibson, Hannah Goff, Arlane Gordon-Bray, Bo Hart, Stephen Huff for Adeel Khan, Brad Klein, Nathan Lavinka, Anna LoMascolo, Matthew Zackon for Emily Mashack, Katie Greenleaf for Leon McClinton, Joseph McFadden, Michelle McLeese, Karen Sanders, Byron Hughes for Roshaan Settle, Richard Umemoto, Camille Waldron

Absent: Linsey Barker, Tom Brown, Billy Brubaker, Virgilio Centeno, Judith Condezo, Ron Daniel, Lauren Davis, Andy Fortin, James Freeman, Brian Golden, Monica Hunter, Destiny Jackson, Tanya LeRoith, Ingrid Ngai, Matt Penny, Duane Rollins, Abby Schoenfeld, Guy Sims, Edward Spencer, Johnathan Stein, Rianka Urbina, Krishna Vummidi

Guests: Christina Dennis Smith, Chris Wise, Ali Arner

I. Call to Order

Ms. Michelle McLeese, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. McLeese called for adoption of the agenda. There was a motion to adopt the agenda as written. The motion was seconded and approved.

III. Guest Speaker

A. Anna LoMascolo, Co-Director, Programming and Christine Dennis Smith, Co-Director, Services for Women's Center of Virginia Tech

Ms. LoMascolo and Ms. Smith attended to talk about the White Ribbon Campaign, focusing particularly on upcoming events that are happening in partnership with the Women's Center and in the context of Women's Month. The Women's Center coordinates the calendar for Women's Month, which is a University and community wide event for women and men, focusing on women's issues in particular. They distributed the calendar of events and information on the White Ribbon Campaign. Some events that they highlighted are the Clothesline Project, which will be displayed on the Drillfield, March 25 & 26, Take a Stand and be Counted, which is a group

picture of men who support the White Ribbon Campaign, that will be taken on Thursday, March 26, at 6:00 p.m., on the steps of Burruss Hall, and then Take Back the Night, which will be held on March 26, at 7:00 p.m., on the Drillfield.

Ms. Dennis provided some background on the White Ribbon Campaign which had not been undertaken in the last couple of years, noting that following the tragedy in the Graduate Life Center, this was a good time to bring the campaign back to campus along with the Clothesline and Take Back the Night projects. They distributed copies of the Women's Month calendar and White Ribbons. They will also be asking men to pledge that they are against violence against women and want to end violence against women.

Ms. Smith and Ms. LoMascolo requested feedback from the Commission membership on how people feel, particularly women, about the climate and safety here at Virginia Tech.

- Because of the tragedy in the Graduate Life Center, some male graduate students are upset, not just because of the act, but that they will be looked at differently by women
- It seems that people do not want to talk about the GLC incident.
- Dr. Ferraro noted that the difference between 4/16 and the GLC tragedy this year is that it is a fairly commonplace notion that people tend to identify with the victims of 4/16 because they were a universal group of students, which heightens the reaction, there is the factor of exhaustion, and because the victim was so new to campus, although her demise was awful, she was brand new and did not have extensive connections with people here at the university
- Students most impacted by the GLC incident were female international students and male students. Female domestic students did not identify with the victim as much, and it was viewed more as a cultural issue rather than a domestic issue.
- In response to a question regarding male on male violence, Ms. Dennis responded that they only know what's reported and a lot of it is not. They do hear about violence on men, but it's just not reported as often. There continues to be more male/female violence.
- Incidents tend to focus only on racial issues, and not on domestic issues as a whole.

On March 31, The Campus Climate Committee is sponsoring the "Campus Pulse Point Issues on Violence," which will be an opportunity for round table discussions about violence against women and an opportunity to comment on how the University has responded to violence against women.

The support for this year's White Ribbon Campaign has been overwhelming with students, faculty, administrators, etc. involved in the effort. They appreciate everybody's support and making it such a success.

- B. Mr. Chris Wise, Director of Recreational Sports; Ms. Ali Arner, Assistant Director of Fitness and Assessment, and Dr. Richard Ferraro, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs

Mr. Wise, Ms. Arner, and Dr. Ferraro were in attendance to talk about a resolution that was going to be presented later in the meeting regarding Recreational Sports. Dr. Ferraro provided some background noting that the Recreational Sports Department is built on a great paradox. They have great human resources, they integrate beautifully with other departments and are to be commended, however the negative is that they have a very small physical plant—McComas is just too small and when you add War Memorial, they have a total of about 150,000 sq. ft., which is appropriate for about 15,000 students. They do not have enough quality space to serve everybody. They are in the process of trying to expand the physical plant so that they can serve students, faculty, and staff. They are looking at some initiatives to expand and bring faculty and staff into it, as well as reserving it as a place for students. A pilot program is being planned that will limit the number of memberships where faculty and staff would be able to use the facility and vary the times when they can use them. This would provide two benefits: create a second revenue stream, which would create extra money for repairs, etc. and the other is this could be an opportunity to work out and interact with students. Ms. Wise noted that they will be working with the University administration to talk about integration of everybody into one recreational physical fitness environment and that it will be critical to get student, faculty, and staff input so that they can make that they are moving in the direction that is best for everyone.

Ms. Arner noted that there is now a faculty/staff fee for some exercise classes in War Memorial Hall, at a cost of \$25, as a pilot program. This gives faculty and staff the opportunity to take classes with students and it has been very successful. Faculty and staff have been good role models for students and the program has been successful.

IV. New Business

Resolution on McComas Fitness Programs at Virginia Tech, First Reading: Ms. McLeese Presented the resolution for the first reading and asked for feedback and input once the reading was concluded. Changes and corrections were noted and Ms. McLeese asked that any other changes or corrections should be forwarded to her.

As a point of clarification, Dr. Ferraro noted that to address the issue of overcrowding in the recreational facilities, they are looking at completing the expansion on the back of McComas by fall of 2010, looking at another smaller facility in the next several years, and 10 yrs down the road, possibility another building similar to McComas. He emphasized that there are some uncertainties, but there is a commitment to try to reasonably grow to meet the needs.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Graduate Education is the week of March 23 – 27. A calendar of events can be found on the Graduate School website.
2. March 20 – Alpha Delta Pi will be holding a spaghetti to benefit Helmet Safety Awareness at Customer Catering in memory of a student who lost his life at the end of Fall Semester in a skateboarding accident
3. Delta Zeta will be sponsoring a benefit concert to support medical bills for a sorority sister battling cancer.
4. Ms. Gordon-Bray encouraged undergraduate and graduate students to come out to the Open Session of the Board of Visitors meeting on Monday, March 23, 1:00 p.m., 2nd floor of Torgersen Hall.
5. The SGA Great Debate will be held on March 26, 7:00 p.m.,

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda M. Rogers
Recording Secretary