

Commission on Student Affairs
November 19, 2009
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Brush Mountain Room
Squires Student Center

Present: Sandy Bass, Sara Brickman, Brandon Carroll, Kimberly Carlson, Kristin Carr, Ashley Davis, Rick Ferraro, Laura Freeman, Rebecca French, Charisse Ghattas, Monika Gibson, Hannah Goff, Kristina Hartman, Frank Hernandez, Monica Hunter, Brad Klein, Nathan Lavinka, Anna LoMascolo, Sharon Meehan for Shane McCarty, Michelle McLeese, Matthew Penny, Donna Ratcliffe, Karen Eley Sanders, Robert Sebak, Sharmin Shamsalsadati, Frank Shushok, Guy Sims, Camille Waldron

Absent: Tom Brown, Brian Golden, Shivana Handa, Monique Johnson, Mary Ann Lewis, Ed Spencer, John Steger, Leighton Vila, Ben Wade, Daryl Whitehurst, Nigel Wray

Guests: Kimberly Brown, Eric Schwartz, Carl Krieger, Alicia Cohen, Sue Kurtz, Tracy Newton, Jim Gresham, Shelly Burkholder, Mary Grace Campos, Samantha Kidd, Stephanie Feinberg, Kristen Houston, Dexter Bush-Scott, Adam Rubin

I. Call to Order

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

II. Adoption of Agenda

Motion was made to adopt the agenda as written. The motion was seconded and approved.

III. Welcome and Chair Update

Ms. McLeese welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a few updates:

- University Council has met three times this semester and the SGA constitution was approved at the last meeting.
- CEOD has passed Policy 1025 in support of Gender Expression, but it still has to go to University Council.
- The Diversity Summit will be held on January 29.
- Reminder that the Vice Chair position will need to be filled next semester. Nominations and elections will be held at the December 3 CSA meeting.

IV. Guest Speakers

A. Adam Rubin, President, Stephanie Feinberg, Vice President, Samantha Kidd, Treasurer, Jewish Student Union – *Jewish Student Union's petition to join the Commission on Student Affairs*

The Jewish Student Union presented the first reading for their petition to join the Commission on Student Affairs. They were approved as a CSO in April of 2009 and are the only CSO without a seat on the Commission. The organizations that fall under their umbrella are: Alpha Epsilon Pi, Campus Entrepreneur Initiative, Friends of Israel, Hillel at Virginia Tech, Keshet, Mazon, Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pi, and Teva Outdoors Club. They are requesting a seat to serve as a voice for their constituent organizations, to address issues faced by Jewish students, and to contribute to the minority representation of the student body on the Commission.

- B. Kevin McDonald, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion and Karen Sanders, Associate Vice President for Academic Support Services – *Equity and Inclusion: The Office, The Past, The Present, and The Future*

Mr. McDonald announced that he will be leaving the University to go to Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) beginning in January. Dr. Karen Sanders will serve as the Interim VP for six months. She is well situated to continue to move the initiatives of the Office forward. He also gave an overview of what the Office of Equity and Inclusion does and highlighted some of the programs that are a part of that office, some information about things to come, and noted that the functions of this office touch faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

Dr. Sanders indicated that the Office of Academic Support Services works closely with the Office of Equity and Inclusion on a lot of projects and that she also worked closely with Ben Dixon, the previous Vice President before Mr. McDonald was in the position. She will be looking towards the commission for guidance and to offer some ideas about the direction that the Office of Equity and Inclusion should be headed in and to push our diversity efforts forward. While Dr. Sanders serves as Interim Vice President for the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Kimberly Brown will be serving as the Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Support Services. Dr. Brown is very familiar with the academic support area and has worked with all of the Associate Deans on campus.

Mr. McDonald commended Brandon Carroll on his participation and his working with the Office of Equity and Inclusion and appreciates his efforts to “push the envelope” in the area of diversity.

In response to a question, Mr. McDonald noted that the institution has to be more transparent and more willing to share. We are not so good at acknowledging the things that we are struggling with and this is an opportunity for us to continue to move forward in the area of diversity and continue to push that envelope, acknowledging where the shortfalls are in this area and where we should be going. Students can help with these efforts by continuing to connect the work that you do. It is time to continue to connect and envision diversity with all of the work that we do. Dr. Sanders suggested that students should always keep the Student Representatives to the Board of Visitors apprised of any concerns that they have in the area of diversity. Mr. McDonald also noted that we need to continue to challenge the campus community as a whole to embrace the Principles of Community.

V. Old Business

A. Conflict Resolution and Mediation (update)

Ms. McLeese reported that the survey has not been closed with about half of the student members responding. Even though it is directed to students, she has asked that the faculty and staff also take the survey to let us know if you think this program is a good idea for students and then she will forward those comments to Mr. Robinson and Ms. Sloane next week.

B. Brown Bag Forum for CT Discussion on Anonymous Blogging (update)

The brown bag forum was held yesterday and the attendance was good. Most importantly, there was a very good dialogue discussion with the CT Managing Editor, the Features Editor and the Opinions Editor.

There will be a discussion in December about action items that we may want to pursue during spring semester. Although the attendance was good, unfortunately there were only 3-4 undergraduates in attendance, so at the next forum, it would be great to have more undergraduate students attend.

The CT representatives did express a concern about the lack of resources to make these types of postings anonymous, so they are looking for information technology people who can help them with that.

Due to some comments that were posted by a staff writer for the CT regarding fraternities, IFC has pulled all of their funding support from the CT.

Ms. McLeese noted that clearly this is very important to this commission and we will continue the dialogue and discussion and think about ways to strategize and improve this situation. They are thinking about a public forum in the spring where anyone can attend to have a dialogue in the spring semester. If there is interest in doing this, please let Ms. McLeese know.

VI. New Business

A. Stephanie Feinberg, Vice President, Jewish Student Union – *Resolution for the addition of JSU to CSA, 1st Reading*

The Jewish Student Union Presented the first reading of their Resolution for the addition of JSU to CSA. With the first reading being done, there is a requirement that there be a second reading before voting on any resolution. Ms. McLeese asked that the members go back and share the resolution with their constituents for feedback. Laura Freeman then made a motion to table the JSU second reading until the time the subcommittee gives the formal report to CSA; the motion was seconded. Following a very lengthy discussion, the question was called and the motion was not carried.

Hanna Goff made a motion to forego the second reading, it was seconded. Following the question, the motion was not carried. We will proceed with the 2nd reading of JSU at the December 3 meeting.

- B. Frances Keene, Director of Student Conduct – *Resolution for on campus ammunition ban, 1st Reading and Resolution regarding suspension policy, 1st reading*

In Ms. Keene's absence, Frank Shushok presented the resolution on the Campus Ammunition Ban for the first reading. He also presented a first reading for a resolution related to interim suspension policy. The second reading will be done at the Dec. 3 meeting.

- C. Sara Brickman, Gay Awareness Week Chair, LGBTQA – *LGBTQA Constitution approval*

Ms. Brickman highlighted the changes to the SGBTQA Constitution: have their elections based on academic calendar instead of the yearly calendar which will assist with budget matters, event planning and additional information regarding the academic calendar elections. The other change was to antiquated information – their office is not located in the Office of Student Life.

VII. Announcements

1. In response to a concern that Virginia has been underfunding higher education for almost 20 years, Mr. Carroll announced that SGA is organizing students, alumni, and administration to gather and spell out "OUR FUTURE?" on the Drillfield, Saturday, November 21, 11:00 a.m.. He asked members to come out and help support this effort. They need about 500 volunteers to make this work.
2. Dr. Sims announced that Monica Hunter has been appointed as the Interim Director of Student Activities.
3. Dr. Shushok expressed his regret regarding the discussion around the JSU's presentation of their resolution for membership which was echoed by Ms. McLeese. Ms. Freeman also offered her apologies noting that her comments were made in the best interest of the Commission.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda M. Rogers
Recording Secretary