

Commission on Student Affairs

October 16th, 2008

3:30-5:00 p.m.

Brush Mountain Room

Squire Student Center

Minutes

Present: Linsey Barker, Paul Deyerle, Rick Ferraro, Andy Fortin, Lauren Keister for Monika Gibson, Arlane Gordon-Bray, Bo Hart, Monica Hunter, Adeel Khan, Brad Klein, Nathan Lavinka, Anna LoMascolo, Kirsten Kube for Emily Mashack, Katie Greenleaf for Leon McClinton, Joseph McFadden, Michelle McLeese, Ingrid Ngai, Jamie Howard for Duane Rollins, Abby Schoenfeld, Ro Settle, Guy Sims, Ed Spencer, Johnathan Stein, Lynsey Stuart, Richard Umemoto, Rianka Urbina

Absent: Billy Brubaker, Virgilio Centeno, Judith Condezo, Ron Daniel, Lauren Davis, James Freeman, Brian Golden, Ryan Heider, Zenobia Hikes, Destiny Jackson, Tanya LeRoith, Angie Puryear, Karen Sanders, Krishna Vummidi

Guests: Owen Maroney, Mike O'Brien, Tony Haga, Nathan O'Dell

I. Call to Order

Ms. Lynsey Stuart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

II. Adoption of Agenda

There was a motion to adopt the agenda as written. The motion was seconded and approved.

III. Guest Speaker

A. Michael O'Brien, SGA

The floor was open to any questions the committee had on SGA's voter registration. So far this year, SGA has been involved in several voting-related organizations and initiatives.

1. Through Virginia 21, a higher education political action committee, AARP brought their "Divided We Fail" campaign to Virginia Tech to promote financial security and quality affordable healthcare. One of AARP's goals is to collect one million signatures supporting these two issues and present them to the incoming president. In the three days of AARP's presence, Virginia Tech and SGA were able to collect 1,062 signatures. Their goal is to collect 2,000 in total by October 22nd.
2. Also through Virginia 21, SGA has been working with an organization called "Helping America Vote", an organization that invites college students to become election officials. Though students would have to spend all day at the poll (a deterrent for many), they are paid, and SGA has promoted the idea to Fraternities and Sororities as a fundraising idea. Several students have applied, and though currently all the spots are filled in Montgomery County, people have been placed on a waitlist.
3. Other items SGA has been working on include a voter registration drive and absentee registration assistance (both online and in the SGA office).

A question was raised as to how SGA was spreading knowledge of these initiatives to the students. SGA has already passed on information by distributing literature to classes and using give-a-ways from AARP. It was suggested that SGA inform constituents of the new Virginia law banning any campaign clothing to the polls.

B. Tony Haga, Virginia Tech Police Department

There have been concerns that there's an increase in crimes on campus but according to statistics, there has been a decrease in crimes this past year. Although percentages show an increase, that can be deceiving, and overall, crime has actually remained about the same over the past year. There were 184 reports and 139 arrests in 2007 (73% male, 99% Caucasian) and 112 reports and 61 arrests in 2008 (80% male, 85% Caucasian). However, most of the additional reports in 2007 were due to an increased number of night Football games and the Dave Matthews concert. The most common time for crimes is Saturday night, and most of the crimes take place on the south side of campus (where most of the on-campus housing is located, along with the Football Field). Alcohol is the most common crime on campus, followed by larceny. Compared to other Universities of a similar size and location, VT has a very aggressive policy towards alcohol violations. Though there has been a slight decrease in larceny reports from 2005-2007, there has been a related increase in burglaries due to crime reclassification. Overall, percentages can be deceiving. There were no robberies reported in 2007 and only one reported in 2008, but that led to a 100% increase in robberies on campus. Security begins with the whole community and the following precautions are recommended:

- Trust your instincts
- Avoid working or studying alone in a building
- Avoid short cuts
- Don't walk alone after dark – always use Safe Ride or the call VT's police dispatch (540) 231-6411 (these services are not limited to on-campus students)
- Don't leave personal property laying around unattended
- Carry a noise maker
- Never prop open building doors
- Keep room doors locked
- Never attach your name and address to keys
- Engrave your valuables
- Report any and all crimes

The floor was opened to any questions the committee may have. There was a question concerning Police Academy classes. There are still free classes being offered on a variety of subjects. One class is being offered a semester. Amongst courses offered, there is a RAD class available for women. It was suggested to go online for more information.

C. Sergeant Nathan O'Dell, Blacksburg Police Community Outreach

Recently the Blacksburg police have noticed a much higher BAC in students they've encountered. Whereas before it was rare to see students with BAC levels above .2, police are now finding students in the high .2 – mid .3 ranges. Students are drinking more, more often, and earlier in the week. It was later disclosed that these students ranged from freshmen to seniors, and that this higher consumption of alcohol is a national trend. Officers are being challenged more, verbally and physically, probably due again to the high BAC level. More officers are out on the street, mainly during sports events, both to enforce and to educate. The police are usually asked to hold alcohol education training sessions at different fraternities and sororities on campus, though so far this year none have been requested. This year the number of crimes have remained the same, but the severity of the crimes have increased.

The Blacksburg Police are currently working closely with VT's judicial committee as well as with off-campus leasing companies, so that students who are arrested in Blacksburg face additional consequences on-campus or within the rental community. Police officers do use discretion with each case. There is a high call of service in town, which means limited officers available for DUI monitoring. There are a low number of DUIs overall, which speaks well for the students. Is there any education concerning the legality and limits of Tailgating? No, but there should be. There are some educational systems in place on campus.

D. Dr. Guy Sims, Future Leaders of Student Affairs

Dr. Sims announced the formation of a new interest group on campus, Future Leaders in Student Affairs. The idea for this new group was inspired and developed by Dr. Sims and Karina Pipes, a complex director in Brodie Hall. The goal is to bring students together with professionals and to talk about the field and encourage Student Affairs as a career. The first meeting will be on October 30th at 7pm in the Williamsburg Room with a panel of professionals. There will be two tracks to this program: an exploration track that allows students to examine all of the different aspects of SA, then a more in- depth searching track for students who want to find a specific career in SA. An interest sign-up sheet was passed around.

IV. New Business

A. Revisions to Residence Hall Federation Constitution, 2nd Reading (Bo Hart)

Section D, page 8 was passed out to committee members. Under Membership in Section D, the list of hall councils was removed. Under Section C, a change was made to include Graduate Life as voting members. Under Meetings in Section D, quorum was changed from 10 hall councils to 51% of hall councils. These changes were made from the suggestions of the CSA last week.

There was a motion to vote on the new Constitution. The motion was seconded and approved. The revisions to the Residence Hall Federation Constitution were passed.

B. Resolution on CSA Membership, 1st Reading (Jamie Howard)

The resolution was read and the head of the UCFS (United Council of Fraternities and Sororities), Owen Maroney, was introduced. UCFS is a council that brings together Greek Organizations with special interests, specifically those that are faith, cultural, or service based. The value of having UCFS on the CSA committee is to increase the level of involvement between the two organizations.

It was advised to take out the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School under the list of members on the CSA committee.

V. Open Forum

VI. Announcements

- The ACS will be holding an Open Forum on October 28th at 5:45 p.m. in the GLC Multi-Purpose Room
- During the weeks of November 3rd and 10th, 10-15 workshops will be held to sign-up for annual funding for student organizations.
- Virginia Tech will be hosting 12 students from GSA to attend a conference with Monterey Tech.
- On the Saturday before Halloween, there will be pumpkin carving in Blacksburg Park. There will also be an open forum about the current drug policy held by GSA, SGA, and Students for a Sensible Drug Policy next week (Wednesday/Thursday).
- The Chocolate Festival to benefit the Free Clinic of the New River Valley will be held on Tuesday October 21st in the OBD in Squires.
- The Hokie Grill will be open on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. starting this week. D2 will also begin a partial weekend schedule in a few weeks by opening for brunch on Sundays.
- There will be a Faculty/Staff program held on October 22nd from 10:30-noon in the Payne Hall Seminar Room by the Office of Judicial Affairs to help faculty/staff help students who are dealing with the judicial issues.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Beaulieu
Recording Secretary