

COMMISSION ON STUDENT AFFAIRS
October 28, 2010

Present: Parisa Ahmadi (designee for Lubna Chowdhury), Sandy Bass, Sara Brickman, Lauren Beecher for Michael Cardman, Dustin Dorph (designee for Tyler Campbell), Rick Ferraro, Monika Gibson, Caroline Gimenez, Meg Gough, Bo Hart, Lauren Hemming (designee for Stacey Pannell), Eric Hodges, Monica Hunter, Rawlin Jefferson (designee for Pamela Palmer), Greer Kelley, Nathan Lavinka, Anna LoMascolo, Michelle McLeese, Jonathan Moore, Nate Navasca (designee for Richmond Hwang), Kelly McKew for Matt parker, Charles Petty, David Ramras, Joseph Seaton, Robert Sebek, Frank Shushok, Guy Sims, Ed Spencer, Shyrah Thomas, Joe Tran (designee for Dani Bernabe), Leighton Vila

Absent: Tom Brown, Deepu George, Frank Hernandez, Jessi Kane, Brad Klein, Mary Ann Lewis, Shane McCarty

Guests: Shanoya Conner, Matthew Creasy, Elayna Javaheri, Kristen Houston, Lauren Howard

I. Call to Order

Nathan Lavinka, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

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

III. Welcome and Chair Update (s)

Mr. Lavinka welcomed the group to the meeting and gave the following updates:

- Future agenda topics – Mr. Lavinka expressed his desire to have the meetings be reflective of what the members want. Following the survey he does have future agenda topics, but if anything comes up from the committee member constituent groups, please let Mr. Lavinka know.
- Mr. Lavinka reported that the second blog post is up and explained that it is designed as a way to get others exposed to what we talk about at CSA meetings. He suggested that the link to the blog be included on individual websites and another suggestion was to maybe have it linked to the Collegiate Times website. Other suggestions were pop up announcements in the gym and the weekly student e-mail.

IV. Guest Speakers/Presenters

- A. Dr. Guy Sims, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Working with Student Leaders: An analysis of Student Feedback

Dr. Sims did a power point presentation entitled “Working Better with Student Leaders, an analysis of student leader feedback.” During a presentation at the NACA Regional Conference in 2008, Lee Burdette Williams, Dean of Students at the University of Connecticut, suggested students leaders: have a fear of failure, are perfectionists, thrive on involvement, and have erratic sleep and eating patterns. Dr. Sims, along with Ana Barranchea, Assistant Director of Leadership Development and Devin Dausin, Lee Hall Complex Director, decided to do a similar study here at Virginia Tech and put together a focus group to look at our undergraduate student leaders. The areas of concern that resonated with VT students were: self care, responsibilities and priorities, organization, balance, and a key one was working with administrators:

- Working with administrators is a major struggle
- People forget or are not concerned that they are students
- Treated as if they are on call 24 hours a day
- Too much “red tape:
- Too many double standards

As a result of these findings, Dr. Sims reported that the next step will be to look at ourselves internally to see how we treat students and things that we have no control over and then share this information with staff. He will follow-up with the commission as their research progresses.

V. Old Business

- A. Charlie Petty, Interfraternity Council, Resolution B for Constitution Revisions/Updates, 2nd Reading

Mr. Petty presented the second reading of the resolution to revise the IFC Constitution This will result in the consolidation of two positions into one as a result of work done on the by-laws. Following Mr. Petty’s statement, a motion was made to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded and the resolution was approved.

VI. New Business

- A. Rawlin Jefferson, Black Student Alliance, Ticket Office: Mr. Jefferson gave an overview of what happened. The BSA sponsored the Laugh Riot a few weeks ago, which was supposed to be a ticketed event, but due to communication issues with the Ticket Office, ticket sales were not made available. After this was mentioned at the last CSA meeting, the following day the Ticket Office agreed to cover the organization’s overhead cost. A similar incident also occurred with the National Panhellenic Council’s annual step show last week. They received no communication from the ticket office after e-mails had been sent and phone calls had been made., which resulted in them having to sell tickets at the door and distribute arm bands. Virginia Tech Union has also had some issues, not

necessarily with ticket sales, but with the on-line server crashing, which affected ticket distribution.

Dr. Sims explained that the Ticket Office had a staff change and they were down on staff. This is the explanation but it is not an excuse. He noted that some of the tickets were pre-ready to go but the ticket office did not communicate to make it happen. Efforts will be made to make sure that the next event goes smoothly and he will be holding a meeting to make sure that this does not happen again to any organization.

Mr. Hart recommended that the groups go to the house and senate proposing a resolution or the groups could jointly bring back a resolution to CSA to address this issue. Mr. Vila suggested that we allow Dr. Sims the time to meet and report back from his meeting before taking such action. These issues do seem to be isolated to this semester.

VII. Announcements

- Mr. Vila, who is serving on the Subcommittee regarding the Collegiate Times, reported that there has been yet another incident of anonymous comments following an article written for the CT regarding the Yale Fraternity Pledges shouting sexist slogans. Mr. Vila shared some of the on-line comments that were insulting and noted that he and others find this type of thing to be disturbing. He asked the Commission members for feedback:
- People do have the right to express themselves, but we as a society have a responsibility to let them know that it is wrong. Many newspapers have anonymous commenting systems. Can we take the approach as to how do we send that signal to have a more nurturing and caring community, have more dialogue, editorial team changes, etc. The antagonist relationship that we have with the CT is not productive.
- The Commission does not advocate censorship, but registered user names need to be attached to the comment (with freedom comes responsibility).
- Ms. LoMascolo reported that the Women's Center has recently been contacted by two women who have been personally affected by this type of commenting and feel violated. They requested to have the comments removed and they got a positive response, so the plan is that the CT is interested in somehow removing those comments.
- It would be appropriate for the Educational Media Company that looks over the paper to be responsible to the student body and commit to some dialogue.
- Ms. McLeese asked those who are interested to join the subcommittee and stated that the sub-committee will not only be looking at readership, but they will also be looking at the on-line commenting system and hope to do so in collaboration with the CT. She will present a history of what happened when the sub-committee gives its report. The current sub-committee is: Michelle McLeese, Leighton Vila, Meg Gough, Caroline Gimenez, and Sarah Brickman. She has also asked Peter Velz, Editor of the

CT (invited him to bring others), and Dr. Ted Fuller, Sociology Professor, to serve on the sub-committee.

- November 4, Thursday night football game, VT vs Georgia Tech – Maroon Effect Game
- November 5 – 18, a play entitled The Good Person of Szechuan, Squires Studio Theater
- November 11, “GSA Grads Got Talent,” 8:30 p.m., Graduate Life Center auditorium, with all proceeds going to Relay for Life.
- Order of the Gavel Ceremony, November 29, 4:30 p.m., War Memorial Chapel
- November 28, Gay in Appalachia celebration, 7:00 p.m., Graduate Life Center – will feature a talk by Drew Emery, the director of the documentary “Inlaws & Outlaws,” as well as a viewing of the film.
- November 12, International Beer Tasting, Graduate Life Center
- November 10, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., 5-Year Anniversary of the Graduate Life Center
- Ms. Rogers announced that Commission members who have not yet RSVP’d for the Board of Visitors Brunch on Sunday, November 7, 11:30 a.m., at D2, to do so immediately. Dr. Spencer stated that this is a real opportunity because the whole Board will be in attendance and they are really interested in what is on students’ minds.
- Mr. Lavinka announced that representatives from the Registrar’s Office will be in attendance at the next meeting to talk about the fall break., so each member should discuss with their constituents to get their take on this issue (two day break, Friday and Monday, Monday and Tuesday, etc.). There also may be a presentation from the sub-committee working on the Collegiate Times issue.

VIII. Adjournment – There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Rhonda M. Rogers
Recording Secretary