

Commission on Student Affairs

Thursday, December 1st, 2011

3:30-5:00 p.m.

Brush Mountain Room – Squires Student Center

Present: Shaimaa Abdallah, Matt Banfield, Sandy Bass, Tom Brown, Sue Buyrn, Tyler Campbell, Naomi Dam, Corbin DiMeglio, Rick Ferraro, Monika Gibson, Jacob Grohs, Erlan Guzman, Zack Helmtoller, Monica Hunter, Rawlin Jefferson, Chris McDonough, Michael Goodwin (for Jason Moskowitz), Kelly McKew, Michelle McLeese, Shree Narayanan, Farzana Rashid, Nikki Roy, Caroline Sapyta, Tara Frank (for Katelin Shugart-Schmidt), Frank Shushok, Guy Sims, Ed Spencer, Jay Tucker, John Waters, Alex Walker, Emily Wilkinson

Absent: Lauren Beecher, Atieh Haghdoost, Ceseley Haynes, Mary Ann Lewis, Cheyenne Marshall, Margaret McQuain, Robert Sebek

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bass called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Motion was made to adopt the agenda for the December 1, 2011 meeting. The motion was seconded, carried, and the agenda was adopted.

III. Welcome from Chair

Mr. Bass welcomed the Commission to the final meeting of the semester and expressed his thanks to Ms. Buyrn, who has served as Co-Chair for Fall Semester.

IV. Icebreaker – Show and Tell, Vice-Chair Sue Buyrn

- a. Atieh Haghdoost – Graduate Student – Ms. Haghdoost was not in attendance.
- b. Kelley McKew – Undergraduate Student
Ms. McKew announced that VTU is holding an event called Hokie HolidayFest, here in Squires Student Center. They do gift wrapping, letters to soldiers, etc.; and she also shared a VTU promotional t-shirt.

V. Guest Speaker(s)/Presenter(s)

- a. Shree Narayanan – *Point of View of Graduate Students*
Mr. Narayanan talked about graduate students and how they differ from undergraduate students. He noted that they are of different age ranges, which gives a wide range of perspectives of life. They have different types of commitments which include coursework, research, and teaching.

On a more personal note, some have parents to take care of, children to take care of, and leadership responsibilities. Graduates also compete with students from other universities. In addition to his comments, Ms. McLeese shared notes from her BOV constituency report that shared similar information.

b. Michelle McLeese – *Student Leadership Compensation*

Ms. McLeese reported that the Student Leadership Compensations was a topic that came up last year and that a subcommittee was formed to look at student compensation, what it entails, who gets it, who shouldn't get it, or should anybody get it and she shared the thoughts that were discussed last year. At this time Dr. Spencer did interject that that this topic came about because he is on a listserv with other vice Presidents and the question was raised about how much schools pay their student leaders, and VT was out of line by not paying because most institutions do provide some student leaders compensation. A discussion ensued within the following points being made:

- Should student leaders be service oriented, partially paid, or fully paid and if so, what would the range be.
- Where do you draw the line as to who you compensate?
- Will other students leaders who feel their work is equally important and not getting paid feel resentment?
- Compensation might encourage some who would not otherwise be drawn to leadership positions do so.
- Do not pay student leaders at all.
- Some sort of monetary incentive, but nothing really expensive, i.e., at the most \$1,000 a semester
- Non-monetary compensation packages, i.e, a free parking pass, a meal plan option, ability to meet with people for lunch and have it paid for, etc.
- Polled graduate student leaders and ones who are already paid: some could go either way, but more were concerned about resources, office space, access to equipment, etc.. Majority of students talked to though, said that getting half tuition paid, some sort of stipend, things that could be applied in real time to student fees would be preferred.
- We're not the only student leaders on this campus, and would we be setting a poor example to other student leaders on this campus who don't get paid.
- In leadership positions you are getting experience; putting a monetary amount on a position puts a different light on a position,
- and also where do we draw the line as to who does and who does not get paid. Could create a lot of resentment among other organizations who make major contributions to the University.

- Mr. Bass noted that the two-hour parking pass that some student leaders already receive is not always sufficient due to the length of some meetings and would it be possible to get that changed to a parking pass without a limit. Dr. Spencer responded that this proposal would have to be made to Dr. Wilson and his staff.
- Paycheck is not necessary for undergraduate students, but benefits like class scheduling to help make their job easier.
- The issue of who gets paid and who doesn't get paid in leadership roles was a recurring concern.
- Ms. Abdallah noted that although she gets \$500, she still has to pay taxes on it. Better resources, time management, etc., would be more helpful.

In summary, for undergraduates there is a big resistance to being paid, but accommodating support through class flexibility, early scheduling, meal plans, parking passes, etc. would be more beneficial.

The suggestion was made that appointments be set up with the appropriate individuals regarding parking passes, class scheduling, etc. to see what might be available. Mr. DiMeglio stated that he would be willing to look further into this. A motion was then made to have Mr. DiMeglio serve as Chair of a Subcommittee to look further into his matter. The motion was carried and the subcommittee members are: Mr. DiMeglio, Chair, Emily Wilkinson, Tyler Campbell, Chris McDonough, Michelle McLeese, and Jay Tucker.

A question was also raised that if cost did become involved, would it be student activity monies and the response to that question was yes. Dr. Spencer also noted that he would be willing to accompany Mr. Dimeglio when he meets with Dr. Wubah and Dr. Wilson, or others, as needed.

VI. Old Business

- a. Dr. Sims, Assistant Vice-President of Student Affairs, *CSA Membership*
Dr. Spencer opened the discussion reminding the group that there is a sense of timing and a challenge of moving forward to a general consensus on this matter. With this being the last meeting of the semester and because it takes two readings at CSA and two readings at University Council to get a resolution through the system, it is important that by the end of this meeting we are able to begin a draft of something over break so that the first reading can be done at the first meeting of Spring Semester on January 26. He asked that they remember that we are trying to address the size of this commission, which is currently at 38, and we really need to get it down to the average size of other commissions (low to mid 20's), and that we are also trying to avoid a situation that would set our successors up to accepting every chartered organization that comes along, and we are trying to balance better the graduate and under graduate representation. These are our goals.

Three proposals were up for discussion, one would leave the Commission as it is and the other two would reduce the number to 24 or 26. The selected proposal should do the following: keep in line with the Principles of Community, make sure that what the seats bring to CSA is a part of the Commission's charge, and that everybody needs to make sure that their community has a voice and is being represented the best way possible. The following items were discussed:

- All organizational representatives around the table were asked to say whether their group is governance or programming. Fourteen groups represented indicated that they were programming.
- Too often we come to this group ambiguous to what we are going to decide, we should be doing a lot of decision making, writing resolutions, etc. The charge of the Commission should probably be rewritten.
- Everybody needs to evaluate what their organization is doing and whether or not they really need to be here.
- Why is CSA only endorsing one religious group? Mr. Goodwin noted that JSU is not defined as a religious organization.
- Slighted personally or organizationally is still coming through, what are we doing wrong that makes it sound like we are trying to get rid of our diversity? It was noted that the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity's mission is to make sure that representation and voice is given to all the different constituencies on campus.

Following discussion, Mr. Robinson distributed a restructuring poll so that members could rank in order the proposals to get some sort of general consensus. Dr. Spencer and Dr. Sims will then have some guidance as to what to come to the January 26 meeting with.

VII. New Business

a. Monica Hunter, Chair of Budget Board Sub-Committee

Ms. Hunter reported that the sub-committee has been given a meeting schedule for the spring and they will present to the Commission at the April meeting.

b. Michelle McLeese, Chair of *The Collegiate Times* Sub-Committee

Ms. McLeese forwarded the recommendations made from last year's subcommittee, the survey questions, the sub-committee minutes and the CT ad and their minutes to the Commission prior to the meeting. Dr. Spencer noted that he will get with Dr. Martha Glass, Associate Director of Administration for Assessment, for the Division of Student Affairs, about getting her assistance to help with the survey. Ms. McLeese also reported that she has sent an e-mail to Ms. Kelly Wolff updating her on what the sub-committee is doing and asking if she would like to be involved.

Ms. McLeese also reported that she is interested in having a conversation about the Muslim ad that was in the CT and that it would be important that the Commission come up with a verbal statement of support. It was the consensus of the Commission that this should be done and Ms. McLeese will write it up the statement and send it out to the Commission for review and the first meeting back Spring Semester. We can pass a statement of support for the Muslim Community and other underrepresented students at VT, reinforcing the principles of community.

VIII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.