

Commission on Student Affairs

Thursday, March 1, 2012

3:30-5:00 p.m.

Brush Mountain Room – Squires Student Center

Present: Shaimaa Abdallah, Matt Banfield, Sandy Bass, Tom Brown, Tyler Campbell, Naomi Dam, Caroline Gimenez for Corbin DiMeglio, Rick Ferraro, Monika Gibson, Ashley Bosely for Allie Golden, Michael Goodwin, Jacob Grohs, Veronica Ardaya for Erlan Guzman, Billi Hockman, Rawlin Jefferson, Mary Ann Lewis, Chris McDonough, Ashley Bosely for Kelley McKew, Michelle McLeese, Shree Narayanan, Nikki Roy, Garrett Compton for Caroline Sapyta, Katelin Shugart-Schmidt, Frank Shushok, Ed Spencer, Jay Tucker, Emily Wilkinson

Guests: Jeff Kirwan, John Seiler, Grazia Apolinares, Gene Deisinger

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bass called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Bass asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was made, seconded, and agenda was approved.

III. Icebreaker – Show and Tell, Vice-Chair Rawlin Jefferson

- a. Michelle McLeese – Graduate Representative
Ms. McLeese shared a song that she co-wrote with another graduate student as a theme song for GSA and asked for group participation in singing the song.
- b. Chris McDonough– Undergraduate Representative
Mr. McDonough reported on a program sponsored by RHF, “9400 Students, 9400 Stories” where students are being given the opportunity to share their story on a postcard that may be used for promotional purposes or on the program’s blog. To date they have had close to 1,000 cards turned in.

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

- a. Campus Security/Safety – Major Gene Deisinger, Deputy Chief of Police
Major Deisinger noted that he serves two roles: Deputy Chief of Police, where he supervises the folks out in the field, and University Director of Threat Management Services, where he chairs the University Threat Assessment team. He noted that the purpose of this team is to identify potential threats to our campus in a proactive way to make sure our campus is secure, emphasizing that they are here to help with situations and mitigate concerns, not necessary to get someone in trouble.. He explained the threat management process and then opened the floor for questions

and concerns. He encouraged students to be open and share their concerns with faculty, administrators, advisors, etc. and be willing to work with police to address any concerns they might have. Some other topics addressed were:

- The Safety Ride Service (6,250 last semester)
- Blue Light Phones; how they are distributed through the campus and that there is an on-going process to evaluate where they are needed
- Residence Life Liaison Officers who are dedicated to the residential community
- Biggest classes of crimes are alcohol-related offenses and theft of property
- Safety of academic buildings, specifically classrooms: electronic display boards, police walk-throughs throughout the day and evenings in academic and administrative buildings, and there is a Community and Crime Outreach Program
- Emergency Preparedness Plan – Office of Emergency Management website describes preparedness information,
- Emergency alerts go to faculty, staff, students and visitors when at all possible. In an alert situation, about 40,000 messages are sent out in a variety of ways. These alerts are filtered when they are sent out so some get the messages sooner than others. So we should verbally help spread the news
- Crime Statistics – Major Deisinger explained the Clery Act which requires that we annually publish statistics related to crimes that occur on or adjacent to campus. Crime statistics can be found on the VT Police website.
- VT Police Facilities – Current plan is that the Southgate building at the back of the stadium where the Virginia Tech Human Resource officers are currently located, will become the public safety facility which will include Emergency Management and Virginia Tech Police. There will also be a consolidated dispatch center that will include Christiansburg, Blacksburg, and Montgomery County Police.
- Arrest procedures and how they are handled with students in a drunken states and the idea that individuals are encouraged to walk home rather than drive while intoxicated, yet this too, can lead to arrest. Major Deisinger noted that it is policy that if someone exhibits behavior that could endanger others or oneself, an arrest will be made because officers assume liability once they make contact. An attempt is made to balance what is best for the individual, the community, and university staff who might be involved in some way.
- How an action becomes one that goes before student conduct - Actions in violation of student code of conduct are forwarded to the office of student conduct, whether it be campus police or any other police agency.
- If found innocent by law, what is action of Student Conduct? Major Deisinger described the difference between the criminal process and the administrative process: The criminal process - the burden of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt, the administrative process is based on preponderance of evidence. You can be found not guilty of a crime legally, but still be in violation of a University policy.
- Threat Assessment Team/Issues between Graduate Students and Faculty – The Threat Assessment Team review threats by faculty, staff, students, and even folks from off campus if they pose a threat to the campus.
- About 350 cases a year are reviewed by the Threat Assessment Team.

b. Stadium Woods Issue – Dr. John Seiler

Dr. John Seiler did a presentation on the Stadium Woods Issue giving a brief history of the process that has led to the concern regarding the proposed building of a new indoor athletic training facility that, if built on the Stadium Woods site, would destroy almost a quarter of the forest. Some of the reasons that this is not a good idea are:

- It is a diverse forest community
- The woods are used as classrooms
- 4-7 acres will be impacted
- In the University Master Plan the woods are designated as an environmental greenway, designated as a no build zone
- Groups who have already made a statement against the Stadium Woods as a site for the facility are: the Aboreterum Committee, the Faculty Senate, the SGA is considering a statement of opposition, the Environmental Coalition of Virginia Tech, Army ROTC, and students, town residents, alumni, and concerned citizens have signed petitions that include over 3,700 signatures in opposition.
- E-mails can go to apfse@cvt.edu or www.ipetitions.com
- BOV will make the final decision

Following Dr. Seiler's presentation, a motion was made to do a statement of support and this will be brought up at the next CSA meeting.

c. Presence of Honor System – Lauren Beecher & Katelin Shugart-Schmidt

Ms. Shugart-Schmidt stated that if anybody has any feedback on how the Honor System can do a better job of disseminating information about the program, please send that feedback to her or Lauren Beecher.

V. Old Business

- a. None

VI. New Business

a. C T. Survey Update – Sub-Committee Chair, Michelle McLeese

Ms. McLeese announced that Dr. Glass is sending out a last effort to get survey responses before the survey closes. There have been over 500 responses to date.

b. Hokie Day – Those Who Attended

Everyone was very receptive to the students in attendance. Ms. McLeese noted that the Graduate Student Assembly had 12 students attend, which was the largest delegation that they have ever had.

VII. Adjournment – Mr. Bass asked for a motion for adjournment, the motion was seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.