

Minutes of Student Life Committee meeting

DATE: 2/7/17

Present:

Jennifer Hastings
Renee Houston (Dean's office)
Ella Frazer
Megan Gessel
Kristin Johnson (Senate liaison)
Tyler Randazzo
Brad Reich
Mike Segawa (Dean of Student Life)

The Chair called for "miscellaneous business". The following items were addressed:

1. A current Wall Street Journal article entitled "Witch Hunt on the Quad" – discussion included awareness of terminology in UPS' current draft sexual assault policy and use of terminology in SLC committee work.
2. The Sanctuary Campus movement on campus – student comments that it is still active.
3. A Senate Liaison update regarding direction from the Senate. The update included the following, from the Senate minutes:

Senate Chair Kessel synthesized the conversation into a series of possible actions, while Dean Segawa advised that we be very cognizant of the fact that the burden of doing this work would inevitably fall disproportionately on the usual faculty and staff members who work on issues of Social Justice and Diversity:

- Revision of the Student Integrity Code
- Revision of the conduct hearing procedures
- Review of BHERT and its role
- Examine the potential for a stronger role for faculty in supporting a culture of restorative and educative justice rather than a culture of punishment and shame
- Examine the impact of digital learning on community building

Chair Kessel noted that we need to bring more people into the work involved and continue the conversation, but perhaps by taking the above action-points one by one.

The meeting moved on to the purpose of the current meeting, "discussing actionable activities arising from the last meeting [1/25/17]". Items discussed, and questions arising, included the following:

1. Is FERPA actually an actionable item for the SLC? In any event, what information could/should flow from the university to faculty? Segawa explained the current, general policy regarding dissemination of student academic and conduct records, including potential written releases of information to particular sources. The idea was raised that some form of “informational sheet” discussing FERPA and campus policy could be addressed and disseminated. Segawa noted that Brad Tomhave would be a valuable source of information on this point.

2. Discussion of FERPA and the “bigotsofpugetsound” flier and responsive “open letter to faculty” (neither document was provided or viewed during this meeting). This encompassed two topics.

First, a discussion of the distribution of faculty work including BHERT, social justice, and the committee on diversity responsibilities. SLC committee members wondered if much of this work was assigned or staffed by volunteers and if such activities lead to a disproportionate workload for some faculty, perhaps even “off the charts”.

Second, the question of, “Who has the authority or responsibility for open faculty letters?” Students noted that a letter signed by more than a hundred faculty was read differently than that signed by a few. They wondered whether faculty need a space to respond to events or concerns at a large scale, and engage in broader conversations. They need a more efficient process (given how long the faculty letter took to get out) for responding to issues, and for more clearly defining who is communicating. Hastings asked how the president’s message, which came out quite quickly, was perceived, and whether it was read differently. Students saw that letter as an administrative response. Reich noted it was not. Segawa noted that there is a process for faculty making statements through the senate but it is used rarely. Faculty, he noted, would probably resist a more formal process of response.

Gessel turned to potential action items, including 1) more regular reports to the SLC from Dean Segawa and/or BHERT to both the SLC and the Senate, 2) work on the campus climate and ensuring students feel heard (since the forums don’t seem effective; also, generational literature noted in the previous minutes deserve consideration; students acknowledged that the rules in play, FERPA, etc., prevent students from seeing the change that is being made, and thus they assume nothing is being done; also that not being heard must be understood in a broader historical context within which lack of trust of administrative responses is quite understandable). Segawa noted that his office will be looking at the Student Integrity Code.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted.

Brad Reich