

SLC Meeting Minutes

Date: November 6, 2019

Attendees: Uchenna Baker, Adrianna Flores, Kate Gladhart-Hayes, Zaixin Hong, Alan Krause, Jess Smith (Chair), Mike Valentine (minutes-taker)

Guests: Megan FinCannon, Mara Henderson, Christina Mills

Jess Smith convened the meeting at 4:02 pm.

No announcements.

Minutes of the October 2, 2019 meeting approved with minor revision.

Megan FinCannon, Associate Director of Residence Life for Residential Education, was invited to the meeting to describe the University's involvement with and development of Residential Learning Communities (LCs). Megan described 5 established versions of Residential LCs at the University:

- 1) Nine SSI seminars involve Residential LCs,
- 2) Theme houses,
- 3) Honors Program
- 4) Michel Rocchi International District,
- 5) Business Leadership Program (with details from Alan Krause).

Megan clarified details of several of the programs in response to questions from the SLC. Megan also described the positive effects of LCs at other institutions including increased retention and student involvement.

Jess Smith asked about the relationship between LC faculty advisors and academic advisors. Uchenna Baker responded that they are not necessarily related. Alan Krause added that he serves as first-year advisor and Business Leadership Program (BLP) advisor, and that after the first year students are taken on by other departmental faculty for advising. The BLP develops a sense of bonding and belonging to a community.

Chair Smith then gave the floor to Mara Henderson and Christina Mills, student guests at the meeting. They are members of the Students of Color Community Initiative (SOCCI) who, with three other SOCCI members (Collin Noble, Rebecca Lumbantobing, and Aldrin Villahermosa II), have put together a proposal for a Students of Color Residential Community. Henderson and Mills described the proposed LC based on 4 Program Pillars:

1. International Community
2. Academic Excellence
3. Experiential Learning in Tacoma
4. Enriching mentorship

The Program is designed to provide support for academic and social life for students of color at Puget Sound, and use the surrounding community as a valuable resource for experiential learning. This and other LCs will be seeking institutional support, including funding.

Valentine asked how the SLC might support the Students of Color. Discussion followed on how the SLC might support the development and funding fall LCs. Hong asked how many students of color are enrolled at the University. Best estimate from Mara Henderson is around 26%. Jess Smith asked what the challenges are for LCs, what information is available, and if SOCCI looks at similar programs at other institutions. Uchenna Baker responded that there are a number of logistical difficulties. Many good ideas, but putting them into practice can be problematic. Mara Henderson stated that Pacific Lutheran University has a great program to support students of color. Megan FinCannon stated that students, faculty, and staff are all encouraged to develop Residential LCs. Adrianna Flores asked if the Students of Color Proposal and other Residential LCs are designed for first-year students or all students. Megan and Mara both agreed that getting first-year students involved provides the best results for both support and retention. Uchenna informed that upper class students who had participated in LCs as first-year students often serve as mentors for the program. Jess commented that administrative support for development and implementation of LCs seems critical. Uchenna stated that 2-4 year LCs could be developed as well, and that at other institutions, faculty may receive release units for such activities. Several SLC members noted that there is student demand for LCs and that offering more of them would be advantageous in marketing the University. It was also noted that student-driven LCs are particularly desirable.

Smith announced the adjournment of the meeting at 4:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Valentine