

Minutes of the Student Life Committee
February 9, 2012

Present: Lisa Ferrari, Rebecca Kuglitsch, Nathan Little, Bruce Mann, Sierra Phillips, Mike Segawa, Hannah Smith, Nila Wiese

Mann called the meeting to order at 4: 05 p.m.

The committee approved the minutes of the January 26, 2012 meeting.

Announcements:

- Mann announced that the Faculty Senate will be appointing a new liaison to replace Amy Spivey while she is on sabbatical.
- Wiese announced that the Campus Climate Survey will be open for responses February 13 – 24. Committee members are encouraged to respond to the survey and invite other members of the campus community to do the same.
- Phillips announced that, as a result of her internship with Public Interest Research Group, she has initiated a “new voters project” to emphasize the importance of voting and civic involvement by students. There will be speakers, information, and a voter registration drive in the Rotunda from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 29.
- Smith announced that the RSA will again be sponsoring a suicide awareness event, this time in late March. There will be a vigil and Dave Wright will speak.

Segawa informed the committee about a sophomore event, “Possibilities and Potential,” that took place on the afternoon of Sunday, January 15. Based on the recommendation from the Retention Task Force (RTF) that a student’s first two years are critical to retention, Segawa convened a group representing a broad range of academic and student affairs interests. The group identified topics that would be of interest to sophomores, and designed a program with three components:

1. Plenary session on leadership and social justice, run by Bill Grace, author of *Sharing the Rock*
2. “Common good” sessions focused on big-picture topics such as values, privilege, and decision-making
3. Shorter sessions focused on resources such as Career and Employment Services, Summer research grants, choosing a major, and becoming a sophisticated library user

Complimentary copies *Sharing the Rock* were available.

Approximately 140 sophomores participated, most of them women from Greek chapters. Participants’ evaluations of the event were strong, and Segawa plans to run a similar program on the last Sunday in September. Subsequent iterations are likely to be in September, too.

Committee members had suggestions for improving the program. Smith, who attended the program, thought it would be helpful to have some upperclassmen present to offer some perspective. Little hoped for greater participation of men in the future, and encouraged outreach and marketing intended to promote that. Wiese suggested that Athletics, as well as Greek life, would be a good partner to promote participation.

Phillips hoped future events or outreach targeting sophomores could include information that would give those students ideas about goals to strive for while at Puget Sound. For example, a higher profile of students who succeed at winning scholarships or honors such as speaking at Commencement would help other students both envision themselves in those roles and understand the necessary components for that achievement. Segawa noted that the RTF report recommended increasing the visibility of high-achieving students, and that perhaps a session on leadership opportunities would be appropriate for “Possibilities and Potential.”

Segawa reported that the university will likely continue to have a January event, even when “Possibilities and Potential” moves to September. This year, there will also be a sophomore brunch at the end of this semester.

Smith suggested that a future event could provide information on the types of work experience that would be helpful for students to seek during Summer or the semester. Students have many opportunities to learn about internships, but are less frequently encouraged to think about what skills they may find at their jobs.

Segawa also noted that future iterations of “Possibilities and Potential” will need to take into account the implications of the university’s new two-year residency requirement.

Mann suggested that a sophomore event could productively address issues sophomores find troubling, such as contemplating transferring to another university and financial aid concerns. Segawa and Smith agreed and thought sessions on bullying and on alcohol and other drugs could be useful.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ferrari