

## **Attachment D**

To: The Faculty Senate

From: Bruce Mann, Chair of the Student Life Committee

Re: Report for the year 2011-2012

Date: April 16, 2012

The Student Life Committee (SLC) met throughout the fall and spring terms, most often on a bi-weekly schedule. The members of the committee this year were: Lisa Ferrari (Associate Academic Dean, staff), Cameron Ford (student), Rebecca Kuglitsch (Library staff), Nathan Little (student), Bruce Mann (faculty, chair), Sierra Phillips (student), Geoff Proehl (faculty), Mike Segawa (Dean of Students, staff), Hannah Smith (student), and Nila Wiese (faculty). Amy Spivey was the Senate liaison during the fall, and for the balance of the year Mike Segawa shouldered the burden as Senate liaison.

It should be noted that the committee operated this year with less than the full complement of faculty appointments. Usually, four faculty are appointed, but this year SLC operated with only three. The Senate was notified, and permission was given to proceed. Rebecca Kuglitsch accepted the "visiting" position of library liaison, following the tradition started last year of having a representative from the library staff attend and participate (but not vote) in SLC affairs. We recommend this continue as the library, through a number of programs, is strongly tied to student life and the campus intellectual climate.

The Senate provided the SLC with the following charges for the 2011-12 year:

1. Review the residential housing plan and planning process and make recommendations to the Dean of Students.
2. Review the student retention plan and planning process and make recommendations to the Dean of Students.
3. Review the campus culture for underrepresented students and make recommendations to the Dean of Students.

As the charges suggest the primary purpose of the committee is to provide guidance, counsel, and advice to the Dean of Students. Hence, other items considered by SLC were at the request of the Dean.

Much time was devoted to the Dean's presentation of the continuing work on student retention and the related issue of buildings (residential facilities and the student center). The Dean's presentations followed from the report prepared by the Retention Task Force (12 July 2011). Dean Segawa noted that an important part of the report's recommendations deal with students' first and second year experiences. One set of initiatives addressed the need for better data collection to more rapidly and constructively identify students having trouble and at academic risk. The student alert system is working as intended, but creating more active intervention measures (when needed) would be beneficial. One committee observation was that not all students currently appreciate the import of mid-term grades. Instructors and advisors could be better "trained" at using mid-term information to assist students having academic problems.

When a student has serious academic problems (GPA well below 2.0) during the first (especially) or second year, there is a question of whether encouraging the student to remain enrolled is good policy. Data suggest that students in this situation rarely recover and graduate. Hence, it is recommended that a policy of encouraging those students to leave and consider other educational avenues should be considered. This problem exists for only a small fraction of the student population. SLC reacted favorably to this policy. This would relieve the university from expending resources in an area with very low potential returns, and would be more equitable to the student.

The Dean reported that first and second year student exposure – both in class and as advisors – to the “best” quality faculty makes a significant difference in student satisfaction and retention. It was recommended that the university should avoid assigning adjunct, visiting, and/or part-time faculty to first year classes. Of particular importance is the use of “best” faculty in first year seminars.

The Dean suggested that more attention could be given to helping faculty become more effective advisors. Faculty should be comfortable with more than just the “nuts and bolts” of procedures and registration. They should have an operating command concerning resources available to help students and be knowledgeable about how to make referrals. And, to the extent possible, faculty should be able to assist students in recognizing academic problems and how to address them – including the use of time issues, participation in co-curricular activities, and maximizing the benefit from the residential life experience.

The committee discussed the possibility, and the reluctance, of evaluating academic advising. The committee recognized that this should not include evaluating “personal” advising issues, but rather focus on academics and assisting student to succeed.

Finally, the committee considered ways to improve the “out-of-class” intellectual atmosphere. Concern continues from students that the campus atmosphere does not encourage scholarly and intellectual exploration beyond the classroom. In this regard, Dean Segawa reported good results from residential seminars and, therefore, an interest in expanding those offerings. He also noted that departments could do more in terms of supporting student affinity groups, encouraging attendance at speaker series, use of departmental blogs, and the like. The student members of the committee agreed these would be useful and improve the intellectual atmosphere on campus.

Dean Segawa reported on a trial program for second year students, “Possibilities and Potential,” that his office ran just before the beginning of spring term. The idea is to provide a set of short programs to inform and engage the class of second year students. The topics included sessions dealing with academic issues, social justice, group decision making, and access to university resources (advising, career planning, and research grants, for example). The response from the attendees (about 140 students) was positive. This program will be implemented and used as a “sophomore” year enhancement. The intent is to build in a coordinated way on the successful first year programs, to provide second year

students with information, and to offer opportunities to enrich their campus experiences. This program represents one step toward more active and intentional programming for second year students – this is a crucial year before students declare majors and become more academically engaged within departments.

The committee met with the University's Chief Diversity Officer (Kim Bobby) and the Director of Multicultural Student Services (Czarina Ramsey) to review diversity and multicultural concerns, activities, and programs. The committee was informed about the Campus Culture Survey. This instrument is designed to assist campus members in evaluating their cultural competency. The university continues to work with students, faculty, and staff on making the campus an open and friendly learning environment.

The committee heard from library staff (Rebecca Kuglitsch and Lori Ricigliano) and the director of the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching (Julie Christoph) about academic integrity programs. The library offers a number of materials for students to consult regarding scholarly practices and skills. These web-based tutorials are used by almost all entering students (97%) and indicate those students have a fairly sophisticated understanding of the basic elements (87% average score). The library staff continues to assist faculty with in-class presentations, library tours, and individualized help. Student referrals to CWLT for issues of plagiarism or inappropriate scholarship are not a large problem. Students run into trouble most often because of time pressures or inattention to details. The CWLT will provide more information and assistance to first year seminars in hopes of improving student understanding of the appropriate standards for scholarship.

Director of Security, Todd Badham, and Assistant Dean of Students, Kate Cohn, reviewed the current status of campus safety and security issues. By and large, conditions on campus remain good. Enforcement efforts focus on education and concern for personal safety. Resident assistants and the Dean of Students staff assist Campus Security, as needed. Data on reported incidents do not indicate any new trends or emerging concerns – alcohol consumption and illegal drug use problems exist, in and out of the residential units, but remain at “tolerable” levels and in line with prior years.

Finally, Dean Segawa led a discussion on the current architectural program for a new residential facility and the renovation of Wheelock Student Center. The residential building will be located between the Health Sciences Building and Seward/Regester Halls, adjacent to the Eye open area of Commencement Walk. The building will provide dormitory space for between 125 and 135 students in single occupancy rooms. Residence hall rooms will be clustered into living units, “houses,” varying in size from nine to fourteen. Each “house” will have common areas and full kitchen facilities. The building will be programmed with public meeting spaces – varying in capacity from 100-plus to 3-4 people. Separate public access will provide privacy for residents. It is anticipated that the “houses” will be affinity-based, so that common interests will promote student interaction and intellectual exploration outside of the classroom.

The new residential facility is the next step in the university's long range plan of housing more students on campus. In addition, the new facility will allow for implementation of the

two year residency requirement (taking full effect in two years) without significant disruption for continuing upper-class students.

Plans and program elements are being designed for a renovation and expansion of the student center. One important issue under discussion is the how increase the size of the dining area, especially in anticipation of more students living on campus. The planning will also consider how to create more meeting space in the facility. And, the design will provide a way to rationalize the use of office space in Wheelock.

For next year the committee recommends:

- Remove the charge concerning international programs and student integration. This is now appropriately the purview of other committees.
- Charge the committee with advising and assisting the Dean of Students as appropriate.
- Charge the committee to continue assessing issues and programs regarding campus diversity.
- Charge the committee to continue monitoring issues and programs regarding campus intellectual climate and academic integrity.
- Charge the committee to review the plans for the two year residential requirement, the new residential facility, and the renovation the Wheelock Student Center.