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Minutes of the Student Life Committee

January 29, 2013

Wheelock Student Center, Room 201

Present: Student Rep. Katy Appleby, Student Rep. Ryan Del Rosario, Associate Dean Lisa Ferrari, Prof. Bruce Mann, Dean of Students Mike Segawa, Prof. John Wesley. Guest: University Chaplain David Wright.

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

The minutes from last meeting (November 29, 2012) were approved.

Mann turned the meeting over to Segawa.

Segawa announced the main agenda of the meeting: to review the Campus Climate Survey results from 2012, and compare them to the results from the previous survey in 2006. Segawa admitted the difficulty of analyzing the available data, particularly with respect to how and to what extent we were to disaggregate the survey questions. Nonetheless, what matters most is how we use this information: How does it suggest our course of action, and our priorities?

Based on the report, Segawa said that numerically we look good, but that the comments tend to tell a different story. He noted that response rates in 2012 were higher than in 2006. At that point, Segawa turned the meeting over to Wright.

Wright began with the caveat that this survey was not scientific in the sense that it would pass muster in an academic journal, and reiterated Segawa's earlier point that its primary purpose was to learn about ourselves. A comparison of the 2006 and 2012 reports in terms of numerical reporting of discrimination shows a decrease in most categories. However, faculty and staff reported an increase in discrimination in terms of socio-economic status, while there was a sharp decrease in this same form of discrimination with respect to students. Appleby asked where people were hearing this discrimination, and Wright responded that most comments reported overhearing conversations. When Mann asked what might explain the sudden drop in student reports of socio-economic discrimination between 2006 and 2012, Appleby suggested an assumption amongst students (however erroneous) that they were all from the same class background; Ferrari suggested that this may derive from the change in questions from 2006 to 2012; Wesley suggested the post-2006 economic recession as a possible reason why students might be more sensitive about making such remarks.

Mann returned the conversation to the question about how we proceed based on these results, and noted one problem of creating a campus atmosphere that was too cozy. He noted that the world off-campus won't care about offending people based on socio-economic status, gender, race / ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Appleby said that an awareness of the "real world" is important, and that we should focus on taking our values out there rather than emerge from college life with the expectation that they will be treated like they were on campus.

Mann adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Wesley