

**Date: April 10, 2007**

**To: Faculty Senate**

**From: Nick Kontogeorgopoulos, Chair, Student Life Committee**

**Subject: Student Life Committee Final Report, 2006-2007**

Committee Members:

Taylor Ash (student representative), Ryan Dumm (student representative), Nick Kontogeorgopoulos (International Political Economy), Jan Leuchtenberger (Foreign Languages and Literature), Mita Mahato (English), Chris McKim (Music), Cathy Hale (Psychology), Mike Segawa (ex-officio), Danni Simon (student representative), and Carrie Washburn (ex-officio, representing Academic Dean)

The Student Life Committee met during the 2006-2007 academic year to discuss the following charges from the Faculty Senate:

1. The Student Life Committee serves as a part of the Student Affairs Division's ongoing departmental review process.
2. The Student Life Committee provides input on various Student Affairs projects and initiatives as brought to the committee by the Dean of Students.
3. The Student Life Committee provides input to ASUPS on various projects at the request of that body's executives.
4. The Student Life Committee reviews information sources available that could help identify issues relevant to student life.

In the remainder of this report, work completed by the Student Life Committee (hereafter SLC) will be discussed according to the charge under which specific activities fall. (Please note that much of the description of what the committee accomplished is taken directly from the minutes of our meetings, recorded by our secretary, Jan Leuchtenberger.)

Charge #1: The Student Life Committee serves as a part of the Student Affairs Division's ongoing departmental review process.

As part of its regular five-year self-study (required by each division of Student Affairs), Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services (CHWS) asked for volunteers from the SLC to serve on the CHWS self-study review committee. Nick Kontogeorgopoulos and Chris McKim agreed to serve on this committee. However, this self-study was cancelled when Mike Segawa became Dean of Students in November, 2006. (The self-study process within Student Affairs has been discontinued until the procedures can be assessed and streamlined by Mike and his staff.)

Charge #2: The Student Life Committee provides input on various Student Affairs projects and initiatives as brought to the committee by the Dean of Students.

This is our most important charge, because there is no other place in the university where faculty, students, and staff can consult with the Dean of Students on Student Affairs projects and initiatives.

This is the charge under which most of the committee's work falls. Below is a list of Student Affairs projects or initiatives discussed by the SLC:

- *Working Group on Local Addresses.* Jean Kim asked the SLC, on behalf of the Working Group on Local Addresses, for input on how to deal with the collection of student addresses. The SLC offered the following suggestions to the Working Group:
  - In the welcoming email sent out to students every fall, there should be a link to Cascade for them to update their local addresses. Students should be advised that this information is for official use only and not for publication. They will also be informed that addresses will need to be updated before they can register for spring semester.
  - During fall registration for spring semester, there should be a prompt for those who have not yet updated addresses – they would not be able to proceed without doing it.
- *Proposed working group on moving from land lines to cell phones on campus.* Jean Kim informed the SLC that a new working group was to be formed soon to begin discussion of the following issues:
  - What phone numbers should be collected from students – should we be collecting cell phone numbers?
  - If primary means of contact is to be cell phones, how do we address the office budgetary issues of calling students' cell phones (that are often long distance numbers)?
  - Do land lines in dorm rooms need to be maintained when students rarely use them or even activate their voice mail?

The SLC offered the following input:

- The school probably cannot take away land lines unless it is prepared to give all students cell phones.
  - One option could be common land lines in quads/halls in the dorms (rather than in each room) so that phones are available but not going unused in every room.
  - When collecting local addresses, the school should ask for the phone number where the student can most likely be reached.
  - Prepaid phone cards could save money for departments that need to contact students' long-distance cell-phone numbers from land lines.
- *Strategic planning committee on Greek life.* Jean Kim informed the SLC that a committee had been created to explore ways to integrate the Greek community more fully in the life of the University, and to review the recruiting process of Greek organizations. SLC member Mita Mahato volunteered for, and has served on, this committee.
  - *Housing review board.* Jean Kim requested that a faculty member on the SLC serve on a review board that would decide whether to allow a Greek organization to keep a campus house, and more specifically whether, and how best, to open the application process to all interested parties. SLC member Jan Leuchtenberger volunteered for, and served on, this review board.

- *Academic honesty.* The SLC was asked by the Jean Kim to give its opinion on the best place for a discussion of academic honesty with the incoming freshmen class. The committee asked Carrie Washburn to pass along several recommendations to the Orientation Planning Committee (which, the committee was informed, has been considering the issue of how to integrate discussions of academic honesty into orientation):
  - Perhaps a series of workshops could be offered that were voluntary but with attendance highly recommended by faculty (especially those teaching freshman seminars)
  - The discussion might be received better by the students if offered by Peer Advisors and Perspectives Leaders.
  - The Campus Life Skit might be an ideal place for students to see the consequences of violating policies on academic honesty – either intentionally or unintentionally.
  
- *Housing Occupancy Group.* Mike Segawa and Maggie Mittuch (Associate Vice President of Student Financial Services) updated the SLC on the work of the Housing Occupancy Group, which was convened to come up with proposals for improving housing occupancy and improving the physical plant. Mike and Maggie discussed with the committee several ideas that were being considered at that time.
  
- *First-Year Residential Seminars.* Mike Segawa reported that five of the fall seminars are currently residential – meaning that the students in the class all live on the same floor as well. This was done first on a trial basis and students who signed up for the classes did not know they would be living together. But the response has been very positive and now faculty are being recruited to increase the number to 10 next year. Because of the Mellon Grant, there is funding available for these classes to do outside activities to enhance the classroom experience. Mike informed the committee that the plan is to eventually increase the number of residential seminars even beyond the 10 planned for next year.
  
- *Contact information for students.* The SLC discussed the issue of how to keep contact information for students as current as possible (this issue was discussed because it has been an ongoing concern for Student Affairs). Mike Segawa reported to the committee that OIS has purchased address verification software that will be implemented in the registration process.
  
- *Sexual assault and sexual harassment policy.* Mike Segawa informed the SLC that Student Affairs would like to revise the University’s Sexual Assault Policy, which is currently a subset of the overall Harassment Policy. As part of the Harassment Policy, the adjudication process for sexual assault complaints follows the same process used in all other harassment claims, but this process may not be sensitive enough to the victims. For example, under the current policy, if a woman wanted to bring a student through the conduct process for alleged sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator would be allowed to choose the venue from among the following: the Dean; a smaller committee that includes students; or the Honor Court, which includes mostly students. This policy is perceived as a reason why some students might refrain from reporting attacks. In order to bring charges, the school needs the cooperation of the student victim, but because that victim loses control of the process under the current policy, she/he might not want to cooperate. Currently, a committee composed of faculty and students is writing up a draft of a new sexual harassment policy that includes: more definitions of sexual assault, rape, etc., using language borrowed from other institutions; and, an adjudication process that creates a Sexual Harassment Board of three people (one faculty member, one student, one staff member), all of whom will be trained to deal with sexual assault. This takes the adjudication process out of the hands of the

alleged perpetrator. Mike informed the SLC that the draft of the new policy would be sent to the SLC for review (which it was later in the year) before sending it on to other relevant committees for approval.

- *ISLO and student reflection.* One of the SLC's charges last year was "to support, review, and respond to the work of the Task Force on Defining Integrated Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO) on behalf of the Faculty Senate." ISLO, which met during the 2005-2006 year, issued a final report in October, 2006. The current SLC reviewed this report and received an overview of ISLO's work from two current members of the SLC (Nick Kontogeorgopoulos and Mike Segawa) who also served on ISLO. Among the issues discussed by ISLO, student reflection of their experiences at UPS was one that dovetails with the responsibilities of the SLC. ISLO noted in its final report (pp, 12-13) that:

One area of program development which many members of the task force felt might complement and reinforce the University's core mission, would be programs that stress the need for students to develop a pattern of "time out", to schedule time for personal reflection, to consider down-time and rest-time, and what one task forced member called "scheduled freedom." Taking time for reflective consideration of the breadth and depth of one's commitments, of the prioritization of one's activities ,of the self-assessment of one's goals, seem to us a worthwhile endeavor for all students to pursue.

Though this year's SLC was not charged with supporting, reviewing, and responding to the work of ISLO, we nonetheless took up the issue of student reflection since it clearly relates to student life, especially student engagement (discussed later in this report). The SLC noted that there are currently opportunities for seniors to participate in Senior Focus Groups but that participation is limited to a relatively small number. For quite some time, there has been interest among different groups in organizing something that would give seniors time together to reflect on their four years. The SLC discussed an idea proposed by Carrie Washburn: the idea is to have a Senior Day or Senior Week in the week before Spring classes start. Some Committee members pointed out that we welcome students very warmly and give them so much guidance as First-Year students, and there is also a program for Sophomores, but there is nothing like that for Seniors.

Some benefits of this program and its timing would include:

- Closer to graduation, everyone is busy and many are too ready to leave for them to be interested in reflection.
- Many seniors are eager to come back to campus before spring classes start because they have difficulty staying at home for long periods.
- It would give students a chance to look back on 7 semesters and evaluate what they have done and haven't done while there is still one semester left. This could have an effect on how they spend their last semester.
- It would keep them more engaged with school and the campus community and make them better mentors in the final semester (to pass on what they have learned over the past years) and better alumni once they leave.
- This reflection could allow them to see some of the more intangible skills they have acquired while at UPS and give them a different perspective on the job hunt.

- It would provide an opportunity for students to receive advice from CES on strategies for finding jobs.

The program could include:

- A structure much like Prelude, where small groups meet with 35 faculty members willing to participate.
- A possibility to bring together original Prelude groups, some of whom may not have seen much of each other during their four years on campus.
- Some new traditions that could become important rites of passage.
- Participation from CES.

Possible sources for planning this program:

- The Freshman Orientation Committee, which already organizes a similar program and has representation from all areas that would also be good for this program.
- The Prelude Committee.
- The SLC could provide faculty input.
- A task force or committee in charge of planning could look at other schools and see what they do for their seniors.

Student members of the SLC stated that students would be interested in this opportunity and would be happy to return early for it. Faculty members also felt that faculty would be willing to participate if they were compensated as they are for Prelude.

SLC members suggested going forward next January with a “beta project” to get the concept up and running on a smaller scale with perhaps 10 faculty members. This could be done with the expectation that the full project could be implemented in two or three years.

The SLC asked Mike Segawa to convey to Kris Bartanen the SLC’s strong support of the idea and its recommendation that a task force be developed to flesh out the details. That task force could draw on the Orientation Planning Committee and any others it sees fit.

Charge #3: The Student Life Committee provides input to ASUPS on various projects at the request of that body’s executives.

ASUPS did not seek SLC input on any projects. One of the committee’s goals for next year is to communicate with the ASUPS Executive and make sure that they know that they can seek faculty input through the SLC.

Charge #4: The Student Life Committee reviews information sources available that could help identify issues relevant to student life.

There are several sources of information that allow the SLC to identify issues relevant to student life. Other than information received from students, faculty, and staff—all of whom may at any time bring relevant concerns or ideas to the SLC—there are two primary sources of information.

First, beginning this Spring, the SLC will each semester receive a report from the ASUPS Student Concerns Committee. In February, Jesse Rowe, Chair of the ASUPS Student Concerns, submitted the committee's report summarizing student concerns/complaints received by her committee. The SLC reviewed this report, deciding that nothing warranted further action on our part (i.e., follow-up action on any of the particular student complaints summarized in the report).

Second, the SLC noted that the large amount of data gathered by the Office of Institutional Research (IR) is not shared with the campus community, and that the only place where it is currently discussed is in Cabinet meetings. Hoping to use IR data to identify issues relevant to student life, the SLC initiated a conversation with Randy Nelson, Director of IR.

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, Randy attended a SLC meeting and gave us an overview of the various surveys conducted on campus, and the data that these surveys produced. Randy also addressed the following questions, which were sent to him prior to the meeting:

1. What assessments are done annually of students and faculty?
2. What ongoing assessments are done of students and faculty?
3. What data sets are available to the Student Life Committee?
4. What does your office do with the data that it collects (i.e., is there a formal protocol? How is the information on data distributed and to whom?)
5. Do you have any ideas on what this committee may want to do with the data available in order to identify issues of importance to students?
6. Are there any data the university is not collecting, but should?

In response, Randy reported the following at the October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- His department officially reports to the Academic Dean but also conducts surveys as requested in other areas, the results of which are reported to the parties that requested them.
- He gave a list of all of the regularly scheduled assessments, when they are given, to whom they are reported, and how they are reported. He also listed some of the more recently conducted special assessment projects.
- He suggested that the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) and the Senior Focus Groups might be the most helpful to the SLC in isolating issues.
- He pointed out that some of the findings could be shared immediately while others would have to be requested and formally released by the Academic Dean.
- In addition, he assured all that anything that is released is compiled data, never raw data.

Following this meeting, the SLC deliberated on what variables to investigate, or more specifically, on what questions to ask Randy (who stated that he could work with his data sets to provide information on specific variables). The SLC decided to focus on the issue of *student engagement*, since Jean Kim and Mike Segawa both reported that UPS students appeared to become less engaged in campus life in their senior year. Another reason that the SLC focused on student engagement is that it was also a prominent issue in the deliberations of ISLO.

Towards this end, the SLC requested that Randy tap into existing data to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How does the depth of student involvement in co-curricular activities (measured in hours of participation) change between the freshman and senior years?
2. Are juniors and seniors more selective in their co-curricular activities than freshmen and sophomores?
3. Do students demonstrate different patterns of engagement (in particular, are they more or less engaged) after returning from being away on study abroad programs?
4. Does engagement vary according to variables such as gender, home state (or region), socioeconomic class, major, etc.?
5. Is there a relationship between depth of student involvement in co-curricular activities (measured in hours of participation) and academic performance (measured by GPA)?

In response to our questions on student engagement, Randy made the following observations:

- The results show that students with higher GPAs tend to be more engaged, which in general demonstrates that co-curricular involvement is not detrimental to academic achievement. However, there are still some cases in which students make poor choices – i.e., when forced to choose between class or activity, they choose the activity.
- Many of the answers to existing survey questions deal with hours spent on various college-related tasks and activities, but “hours spent” does not accurately answer our question about students’ level of involvement in and focus on activities. The number of hours does not specify what those hours are being used for or whether the students are reflecting on those hours spent and their benefit to them overall.
- A better way to measure the above and answer our questions would be focus groups. This would also more closely tie the concerns of ISLO with our own questions.
- Results also show that students tend to be in leadership roles in second and third years at college, but then pull away in the senior year. Their replacements often start over in that position without the benefit of the previous person’s experience. It would be good to find a mechanism for “downloading” the brain of the previous leader – to find a way they can mentor those who come after them before they actually leave campus.

The SLC plans next year to continue its correspondence with Randy Nelson regarding the use of data to identify issues relevant to student life.

## Other Business

In addition to the work outlined above, the SLC completed the following activities:

*Self-Evaluation.* At the end of last year (2005-2006), the SLC began to discuss the Senate charge that asked all standing committees to deliberate on particular questions related to self-evaluation. As part of that deliberation, the committee began to discuss the need to develop more consistent charges from year to year. No report was sent to the Senate last year, and the current SLC requested an extension of the Fall deadline in order to assess adequately the implementation of new charges and new actions (for example, working with Randy Nelson in IR). The committee completed its self-evaluation and sent it to the Senate Chair on March 1, 2007.

*Faculty Bylaws.* The SLC received a request from the Senate Chair to take a look at the proposed changes to Section II 2 of the Faculty Bylaws. At the first reading of the proposed changes to the Faculty Bylaws in the January 29<sup>th</sup> Faculty Meeting, at least two faculty members expressed a concern that the proposed change would remove language highlighting faculty involvement in "...other student affairs related to the academic life of the University." In order to address this concern, the SLC added to the proposed revision of Section II 2 of the Faculty Bylaws the following section, taken verbatim from Ch. I, Part D 2e of the Faculty Code:

"The Faculty shall participate in service that advances the mission of the university, including participation in departmental and university governance, in co-curricular programs, in promoting intellectual vitality and a high quality of life on the campus, and in activities which help convey the nature and purpose of the university to its constituencies."

*Other* – Nick Kontogeorgopoulos, the Chair of the SLC, attended several events pertinent to student life, including a presentation and discussion at the Center for Writing, Learning, & Teaching entitled "Residential Seminars: Challenges and Opportunities," and several Faculty-Student Affairs (FacSA) Lunch Seminars.

## Looking Forward

The SLC looks forward to next year for several reasons. First, having the same Dean of Students for the entire year will allow for more consistency and better communication since many of the projects initiated by the previous Dean have either been discontinued or have not produced any follow-up information for the SLC. All but one faculty member of the SLC is returning to the committee next year; this will also promote continuity and consistency.

Second, the SLC has identified charges (discussed below) that we believe will work well for us next year: these charges are based on this year's charges, which have also worked well. Last year's committee felt that there was a need for more consistent charges that avoided redundancy with the work being done by other committees. For this reason, this year's committee developed four charges that are deliberately open-ended, flexible, and do not replicate the work being done by other faculty committees. The reason that we sought flexibility in our charges is because the committee is not always aware at the end of the previous year which initiatives, projects, or issues that the Dean of Students will need to bring before the committee for discussion or advice in the coming year. Thus, the SLC's charges this year may appear broader than the charges for other committees, but they have served the committee well. Charge #2 has been especially important since it affirms the central role of this committee, namely to serve as an advisory body to the Dean of Students.

At its last meeting, the SLC discussed its charges for next year, and would like to propose the following four charges:



1. The Student Life Committee provides input on various Student Affairs projects and initiatives as brought to the committee by the Dean of Students.
2. The Student Life Committee provides input to ASUPS on various projects at the request of that body's executives.
3. The Student Life Committee reviews information sources available that could help identify issues relevant to student life. Such information sources include individual faculty, students, and staff, as well as the Office of Institutional Research and the ASUPS Student Concerns Committee.
4. The Student Life Committee provides a pool of faculty from which to draw for participation on Student Affairs ad hoc committees.

The SLC dropped from its proposed charges for next year the charge (from this year) related to the Student Affairs Division's ongoing departmental review process, because (a) this process has been discontinued and is currently under review, and (b) charge #4 in our proposed charges for next year would allow the participation of SLC faculty members in Student Affairs departmental reviews, were this process to be continued again.

At its last meeting, the SLC also identified the following goals for next year:

1. To better inform faculty, students, and staff of the role of the SLC, and in particular, the ability of any member of the campus community to bring to the committee issues of concern related to student life.
2. To work more closely with ASUPS in order to allow ASUPS officials to bring projects to the SLC for faculty input.
3. To follow up more rigorously and consistently the work of Student Affairs committees that request input from the SLC.
4. To determine more clearly with the Senate the identity of the Senate liaison to our committee. (This year, a total of four names were mentioned at one point or another as the Senate Liaison.)
5. To discuss a request brought forth by a student member of the SLC to explore the possibility of an alternative, service-oriented Spring Break program. This year, two UPS students organized such activities during Spring Break, but the SLC plans to discuss this idea further and explore whether this can be made into a more regular opportunity (perhaps arranged through the Community Involvement and Action Center (CIAC).
6. To establish an ongoing relationship with Institutional Research that would continue beyond this year and provide a steady flow of information helpful in identifying long-term issues. These could then be addressed by the SLC in addition to emerging issues that are brought to its attention throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Kontogeorgopoulos  
Chair, Student Life Committee, 2006-2007