

MINUTES OF STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE-----3/2/2005

Members Present;

Mark Harpring, Rebecca Fay, Cara Evans, Carrie Washburn, Kurt Walls, Chris McKim, Barry Bauska

Visitors:

Charee Boulter, Houston Dougharty, Mike Segawa

We began the meeting with the recognition that approval of the minutes of our last meeting (way back last fall) would not be possible, as those minutes have not yet surfaced.

Today's meeting continued our on-going discussion of drinking issues on campus. Last fall we talked about significant risks associated with binge drinking, and plans initiated by Rebecca Fay and Cara Evans to promote a Drink Responsibly program this spring. The topic received further impetus for our meeting today from a particular incident that had just occurred on campus. For privacy reasons, the nature of that incident, and of our discussions, as recorded herein, shall be general and non-specific. I will identify the main issues raised, but not all comments will be recorded.

Fay noted that, in spite of considerable "warnings" available to them (in posters, orientation sessions etc.), it is evident that too many students do not grasp the potential serious consequences of their excessive drinking.

Segawa said that the student age group (18-22) has a long history of substance abuse, and the current crop of problems is consistent with that. He recognized the complexity of the problem, pointing out that we have abundant prevention programs and resources—but that, in practice, these kinds of episodes are going to happen anyway. He noted that our response mechanisms are also quite good (as in this case, friends of the student involved did make the right calls to the right people). Nevertheless, the pieces of the puzzle clearly didn't come together soon enough to prevent this case from reaching a serious and dangerous level.

Evans asked if the prevention/education side of the problem may not be less effective than it should be, given that much if not most of this information comes through RAs, not trained professionals; she gave as an example the

Register Alcohol Awareness programs, which were not coordinated with complementary programs offered by CHWS.

Fay told us that after years in a sorority, she had recently become an RA—and it was only then (during RA-training) that she had really received the kind of education about these issues that we might like to think all our students have been getting all along. What she wanted to know was how do we really deliver this information to all the students out there (she'd like to think we don't need a death on campus to wake people up).

Boulter provided us with an impressive array of publications, posters and programs that are made available, and intended to reach students. But, again, the question was: "How many students attend the sessions, read the posters, take the information seriously?" (anecdotally, comments were made about various programs where only 3 or 4 students were in attendance).

As **Segawa** observed, one problem is that this generation of students has been "getting the message" about substance abuse from a great many sources for a considerable period of time. It may be that they've "heard the message" for so long that they may have largely tuned it out. The challenge remains to get the message across, *and* to get it received and processed.

At our next meeting we will continue these discussions on what is clearly an important and relevant topic.

Barry Bauska
Secretary *pro tem*