

Minutes of the Student Life Committee
November 8, 2010

Present: Peter Bittner, Peggy Burge, Lisa Ferrari, Bruce Mann (Chair), Aislinn Melchior, Geoff Proehl, Alyssa Raymond, Mike Segawa, Nila Wiese, Stephanie Wood.

Mann called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

The committee approved the minutes of the October 25, 2010 meeting.

Segawa offered a PowerPoint presentation on residential living that he had given to the Board of Trustees at their most recent meeting. The presentation provided an overview of current residential goals and capacities on campus, and aspirations for the future. The Division of Student Affairs places a high priority on making residential programs sites of student learning. Segawa's presentation highlighted residential programs' "improvement-oriented ethos," which serves the university's mission.

Segawa noted that the university's Strategic Master Plan sets a goal of 75-80% of students living on campus by 2023. The current level is approximately 60%. In order to meet the target in the Master Plan, the university will need to add beds for residents. While building a new residence hall was a relatively low priority in the Master Plan, Segawa argued to the Trustees that this priority should be rethought.

Segawa summarized research by our Office of Institutional Research indicating that students who live on campus show the following characteristics as compared to the overall student population:

1. Higher retention rates
2. Higher levels of academic performance
3. Decreased problems with conduct
4. Self-reports of
 - a. Closer relationships with peers
 - b. Closer relationships with faculty
 - c. Being more "ready to learn"

Wiese commented that the faculty would be interested to know of the connection between living on campus and higher academic performance. Segawa replied that he has not made this information widely available to the faculty because he would first like to know whether the Trustees will approve accelerating the role of residence life in the Master Plan. Mann commented that Jack Roundy would be a good source of such information for the faculty.

Segawa explained that, as compared to students living on campus, students living off campus tend to have lower GPAs and higher levels of unmet financial need. It is unclear whether living off campus is the cause or the effect in these findings. Segawa suggested that having more students living on campus might increase students' sense of connection to the university. This could have many positive effects, perhaps including greater alumni engagement. For example, alumni of the Greek system tend to be over-represented in alumni work.

Segawa noted that we compete with liberal arts colleges that offer greater residential opportunities than we do. Next-step and premiere liberal arts colleges often have 80-100% of students living on campus for all four years. Among our Northwest peer schools, we have the lowest rate of on-campus residents. 95% of freshmen, 61% of sophomores, 44% of juniors, and 24% of seniors live on campus. Of the students living on campus, 48% are freshmen. Student Affairs would like to increase these numbers by offering an attractive residential curriculum, rather than through a residency requirement.

Segawa reported that the President and Cabinet are considering adopting a two-year residency requirement. This change is not likely until the university has more beds to accommodate the additional residents. The Cabinet will report on this issue at the May, 2011 Trustees' meeting. The Trustees are interested in the residency requirement, but wanted more information about the resources necessary to implement it. Increasing the number of on-campus students will create demand for more campus facilities and services, including more common spaces and dining options.

Wiese reminded the committee that, at its last meeting, Shane Daetweiler indicated there was likely enough interest among female students to populate a fifth sorority. She wondered whether doing so might be desirable, given the potential benefits for retention and academic performance. Segawa replied that this point had been raised during discussions on inviting Sigma Alpha Epsilon to be a new campus fraternity. He would prefer to keep the number of fraternities and sororities equal, and so not suggest adding a new sorority until there was sufficient interest to support a new fraternity as well. Wiese asked whether building two new Greek houses was part of the residential expansion in the Strategic Master Plan. Segawa responded that the discussions are in a very early stage, though he was aware that townhouses would be an attractive option for upper-division students.

Mann asked whether there is a notable social division between Greek and non-Greek students. At one time, this was a significant campus problem. Bittner, Raymond, and Wood reported that students do not experience such a division, and socialize easily and frequently with both Greek and non-Greek friends. Segawa noted that this shift in campus culture may be a result of changes in the Greek recruitment process. Recruitment now takes place only in Spring semester, and new students are not permitted to live in a Greek house during their first year. This helps

ensure that Greek students have a strong sense of connection to the larger Puget Sound community.

Burge noted that increasing the number of on-campus students would likely increase the resource needs of Collins Library. The Library might need a larger staff, particularly to extend library hours. Segawa responded that library needs are part of the current discussion concerning expanded resources.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ferrari