

Attachment C
Student Life Committee – Year-End Report

The members of this year's committee were: Peter J Bittner (student), Bill Dasher, Cameron M Ford (student), Bruce Mann, Aislinn Melchior (fall), Geoff Proehl, Lisa Ferrari (Dean's Office), Alyssa M Raymond (student), Mike Segawa (Dean of Students), Nila Wiese (fall), and Stephanie A Wood (student). Peggy Burge attended and participated in discussion as a representative from the Library. The committee met almost every other week.

This year's activities focused on the charges as provided by the Senate and issues presented by the Dean of Students for the committee's advice and consideration. The work of the committee this year was primarily, indeed almost exclusively, to provide opinion and reflections to the Dean regarding campus climate and life. The committee took no actions that require Senate approval or action.

The Senate charged the committee with exploring the university's drug policy (Charge 4). Rather than consider drug use and policy in isolation, the committee explored the broader issue of campus safety. The Security Report did indicate an increase in reported drug use infractions. However, it is not clear whether the increase was due to better monitoring in residential facilities, clearer expectations for enforcement, better detection, or increased drug use. Most of the detected use was for marijuana violation, not for more serious substance abuse and use. Reported alcohol related incidents have declined over the prior year. The Dean of Students' staff reported on the new "Green Dot" program. This program is designed to increase awareness and reporting of harassment problems and to equip students to intervene to prevent situations of concern, as well as aiding in the reporting of other campus security problems. Early indications are that this program has been successful in some cases.

The committee does not see any need for changes in the current drug policy or enforcement activities. The consensus was that the Student Affairs staff are addressing the current issues and are monitoring new approaches to improving campus security, including drug use. The informational programs during orientation appear to be effective in making students aware of appropriate behavior and policies. Drug use infractions, monitored by residential life staff and campus security, are being adjudicated as appropriate under the current Integrity Code regulations. It does not appear that the university has an especially difficult problem that requires new procedures.

The issues of housing, retention, and life on campus consumed a large amount of the committee's attention and time (Charge 1). The Dean reported on the on-going discussions (with faculty, trustees, administrators, and students) concerning the desirability of additional on-campus, university housing. Current university housing is basically at capacity – 93-96% occupied in the fall with some decline in the spring due to students leaving, moving, and studying abroad. The Greek houses are meeting or exceeding their requirement for 90% occupancy. The university currently houses about 60% of the student population. Almost all first year students live on campus (95%), a large fraction

of second year (61%) students are in university housing, but the percentage of third (44%) and fourth year students (24%) living on campus declines dramatically. This potentially skews the nature of on-campus living, interactions, and activities.

Compared to our peer and “aspire to” institutions, we have the lowest on-campus residency rate. The low campus residency rate may also contribute to retention issues, since students living off-campus are less likely to return to complete their degree programs. However, the cause and effect of this relationship has not been clearly established. In addition, because those students living off-campus are less likely to return for evening activities, the mix of students engaged in evening and weekend programs on campus is skewed to first and second year matriculants. Lack of participation by upper-class students may have negative impacts on the quality of co-curricular and social programs.

The current university Strategic and Master Plans envision 75-80% of the student population living on campus. Obviously, this will require the construction of additional university housing. The committee approves this concept and encourages the Trustees to consider making this a high priority in the plan. The Dean has been having discussions with faculty (especially regarding residential life seminars), staff, students, and administrators on what this housing expansion would look like and how it could be accomplished.

The Dean informed the committee about the process and outcome used to select a new fraternity (Sigma Alpha Epsilon) for the university. The number of fraternity houses is now equal to the number of sororities (four). The new house will displace the current Humanities House, but this has been anticipated (if desired, they will most likely move into a residence hall space). There are currently no plans for additional Greek organizations to be invited to campus.

The committee heard an update on the Residential Seminar program. As reported last year, this program is very successful and well-received. The external funding has run its course. The university has opted to continue, through internal allocations, the program with eight to twelve seminars per year. The intention is to integrate the seminars into the residential units, and any new residential facilities will be planned with this as an objective.

The Dean reported on new survey work being done with the sophomore class (part of Charge 3). In general, sophomore students are seriously engaged in the academic program, but report some campus life issues. Time management is one of the more serious issues for these students. Those of the cohort who move off campus, report a lower level of satisfaction. The Student Services staff is beginning to address new initiatives to address these problems and concerns.

The committee explored the issues related to information literacy and academic integrity (Charge 2). Neither the Dean nor the staff responsible for academic integrity believe a serious problem exists. The incidence of active cheating or intentional violations of academic integrity has not increased, and may well have declined somewhat. The problems that now more frequently appear before the staff relate to unintentional violations or behaviors undertaken out of ignorance.

Most often these relate to issues of copyright violations, missing or incomplete citations, and “inadvertent” plagiarism.

The committee heard an extended report by the library liaison about efforts the library has initiated to address this problem. They have created and posted a number of useful resources – for both students and faculty – on-line. Library staff meet with many first year seminars to discuss academic literacy and integrity, and to explain how library resource personnel can be of assistance. The student members of the committee report that these efforts are useful, but can get lost in the flurry of new information provided early in the first semester.

The Dean and library staff report the problem here is on par with what other schools report. Almost all liberal arts colleges recognize this problem and are creating programs and allocating resources to address the issues. The challenge here is how to make the programs effective with a sustained impact. The library staff and the Dean's office are exploring the way information is presented during orientation, working more intensively with the first year seminar program, and considering ways to use residential life staff to help students.

While the Student Life Committee did not believe it was the appropriate body to formulate policy in the area of academic integrity and information literacy, it does believe this is an important concern that requires attention and probably resources.

The committee met with Czarina Ramsay (Director of Multicultural Student Services) and Dean Segawa to consider the mission of multicultural programs and services on campus (Charges 7 and 8). Both reported that organized programs and support for student groups are in place and working well. More than a dozen student groups, from across the cultural spectrum, receive guidance, staff support, and programming assistance. The particular groups do change from year, but the overall nature of this effort appears to be successful.

What is needed now, according to Student Affairs staff and students, is more directed mentoring for students from non-majority and under-represented populations. Thus, work in this area has shifted to more training, personal interactions, meetings, and outreach to appropriate student populations. This is a change in approach from directly encouraging organized activities for groups to working with students more directly and individually. The objective is to reduce the sense of isolation some students experience and to help students discover appropriate ways to define their identities.

Students appear to want more discussion and communication about diversity and identity issues both in and out of the classroom. The Student Services staff is considering ways to expand opportunities in this area beyond the Orientation programming and first year outreach efforts.

It appears this shift from organizational and formal programming to more individualized communication and mentoring is occurring nationally on campuses. Puget Sound is at the forefront of this effort. The committee recommends that this issue remain on the agenda for next year.

The committee did not consider the efficacy of having a member serve on ASUPS Senate (Charge 5). This does not seem to be a significant concern, and perhaps is not appropriate to the work of this committee. This could be revisited in the future.

Issues that should be continued by next year's committee are: housing plans, faculty involvement with improving retention, the campus culture for underrepresented students, and information literacy issues.

After reviewing the discussions this year, considering the data presented by the Student Services staff, and consulting with the Dean of Students, the committee affirms:

1. That the Dean of Students and the staff of Student Affairs should continue to work on programs to enhance the sophomore year experience,
2. That the university should plan for and construct a new on-campus residential facility, and
3. That the university should implement a two year (first and second) on-campus residency policy.

The committee also explored the idea of a "quarter unit activity credit" for participation in programs that deal with multi-cultural engagement, community involvement, and/or information literacy. The sense of the committee was that this could provide a useful academic option for students, encourage discussions regarding these issues, and provide an incentive for students to become more actively engaged.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Mann, Chair, Student Life Committee