

**Minutes of the Student Life Committee
February 21, 2014**

Present: Faculty Members Brad Reich, Lisa Fortlouis Wood, Ben Lewin, David Latimer, Poppy Fry; Student Representative Ryan Del Rosario; Library Liaison Eli Gandour-Rood; Dean Mike Segawa

Meeting was **called to order** at noon.

Announcements

This meeting is in place of the previously scheduled February 28th meeting.

Business

The meeting opened with discussion of the faculty bylaws, particularly those which discuss the SLC. Members were pleased to note that there seemed to be indication in the bylaws that the SLC is answerable to students, and in fact, that is a large percentage of the duties

Concerns were raised about the output of the committee, with the major question being whether the SLC is an advisory committee only, which it appears to be in name. According to the bylaws, the SLC may lack teeth. Members noted that as a whole, faculty participation in governance is overwhelmingly advisory. That said, other faculty committees have specific jobs: Curriculum Committee approves courses, and that is an impactful decision. The FAC committee has power, and is not strictly advisory (though in the end, it was noted, it is the Board of Trustees who have the final decision over FAC recommendations).

In practice, the Dean is unlikely to overrule the curriculum committee, but it is allowed. So these other committees, while nominally advisory, have customary teeth, while members feel that the SLC has been more 'advisory' and less decisive. Some members indicated a desire to take decisive action

Student representative Del Rosario pointed out that there are not too many students involved with SLC, and that one way to be more active would be to reach out to the student groups and work with them.

Wood and Segawa note that the SLC is meant to have three students, but that we have had two students resign recently. Committee members discussed the idea of SLC doing more outreach, which would make it easier to get consistent student participation as student leaders become more interested and aware of what the work of the committee is.

Wood brought up the idea of the SLC holding focus groups to get more information about what our constituencies (students, faculty, staff) want. Members were amenable, but continued to raise the question of how the committee would make a difference for students in the short term, rather than through, say, a review processes which take two academic years to come to fruition. A member pointed out that it matters to the students who are currently enrolled if someone with authority is listening to their concerns and demonstrative responsiveness.

The question was raised of who is driving the agenda for the committee (students? Faculty senate? Student Affairs Office?), noting that we don't want to overlap the SLC's mission to the point of redundancy or overstepping bounds with ASUPS.

Segawa explained that the charging of this group has been straightforward in the past: previous committees have asked the Dean of Students, and his suggestions were given to the chair. The SLC then accepted those issues which most interested it, and any charges which weren't addressed were then carried forward. The Senate hasn't necessarily been any more sophisticated in its charges. Historically, the Dean has made periodic decisions to remove charges from the list

if they haven't gotten any traction. A faculty member asked Dean Segawa for an example of something that SLC has done that has had an impact, or been implemented recently?

Segawa noted that he would need to review the reports. He also pointed out that his office is trying to stay on top of the exact issues that this committee reviews. There are three dozen full time staff and a couple hundred student staff who are working on these issues, and that's where the resources are, and that's where the major momentum around these issues are on campus. Finally, with regards to funding questions that were raised, he noted that it's a relative question. If the dollar amount in question is, say, \$1000 or less, the SLC can work with the Office of Student to make it happen.

Another faculty member noted that in looking for an example of when the SLC actually got something done, a major question to include would be WHY it got done, and whether there were collaborators that impacted the efficacy.

Segawa described an experience from two or three years prior, when there were questions about what our students were actually learning, and so SLC developed an instrument for assessing the impact on students of their abroad experience. In cooperation with International Programs office, SLC administered the instrument and as it developed, the IEC (international education committee) was charged by the faculty senate to take over that assessment. This was an example of an important issue that no one else was working on that the SLC stepped in to do.

The committee then discussed the concrete foundation of the influence of the SLC, considering what this group actually has jurisdiction over. Segawa noted that faculty have responsibility for the "total learning experience" both curricular and co-curricular. As decisions are made, then it becomes the responsibility of staff offices to implement those decisions.

One committee resource could be viewed as 'moral support' or 'throwing our weight behind' something. The SLC could support student organizations. For example, 'Peer Allies' is a group on campus, trying to get its feet, that could use support for direction or funding. When clubs come to ASUPS to be ratified, they need a strong rationale, and the support of the SLC would be helpful. It was noted that this is only useful in the cases in which our cultural capital is relevant to the students.

Returning to the question of a budget, it was noted that SLC doesn't have its own 'bucket of money' but that this committee could probably access money more quickly than other committees, as it can go directly to the Office of Student Affairs, which has resources.

The committee's capital resources then are both financial and cultural. A faculty member brought up the need to view the development of our projects in the long term, and noted that if we are not strategic in that regard, we end up reactive. The committee considered the question of whether it can develop a balance between large, multi-year projects, and smaller initiatives that come up...that is, whether the SLC can have macro and micro initiatives simultaneously. And further, could there be synergy between those initiatives, and perhaps two categories of charges: one that is larger and systemic, the other smaller and likely more chronologically bounded.

A faculty member suggested that the SLC might want to connect with student groups to identify how the groups intersect with broader concerns that the campus might want to undertake, such as "greening" the campus, or looking at nightlight

Wood noted that a central part of the SLC charge is to be the people who have a rich and through understanding of student life, and be the administrative body which listens to students. Drawing links between issues is part of our goal, and if we can do that, our committee will be in a better place next year. She also noted that the committee needs to more fully understand our funding options and what funding processes would be, as acting as a liaison is easier if there's something to offer (financial or otherwise).

Another faculty member agreed, and brought up again that our endorsement (as a liaison or otherwise) would matter at ASUPS, so we should consider that as a place to start.

The committee agreed to reconvene on Friday, March 14th. Meeting **adjourned at 1pm.**