

University Student Affairs and Campus Life Committee

Meeting Minutes

19 October 2011

Members Present: Mike McCarthy (chair), Suzanne Houff, Dan Hubbard (secretary), Kim Kinsley, and Pat Reynolds

The meeting was called to order at 12h in the foyer of the Anderson Center as a joint luncheon discussion with Vice President for Student Affairs Doug Searcy and many members of his staff. Following introductions and brief discussions of each of the various staff functions, Mr. McCarthy emphasized that this committee serves in an advisory capacity and asked those present “What should we focus on?” A lively discussion ensued, from which some of the following highlights are excerpted:

1. Chris Porter, Director of Residence Life, felt that it was vital for us to collaborate with Student Affairs staff. She stated “we are educators in a different area” and pleaded that we should not “let it end at the classroom door.” In her opinion, we needed to not only extend the excitement about learning into the residence halls, but also to make a better effort to actively engage the commuter students.
2. Larissa Ruuskanen, Staff Psychologist with CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services), felt that professors could provide a better “referral avenue” and do more to identify those in trouble. She thought that the faculty network could provide support for “students of concern,” particularly if faculty were better informed on how to refer students to CAPS. She suggested the possibility of either a FAQ sheet or pamphlet on identifying and dealing with both disruptive students and those showing signs of serious psychological distress. Ms. Reynolds suggested the possibility of seminars on Alcohol misuse, disruptive behaviors, addiction issues and the like.
3. Ray Tuttle, Director of Judicial Affairs and Community Responsibility, noted that TIP Seminars were once used to address student issues, and suggested that a similar vehicle might be developed. He urged faculty to be curious and ask students about their lives. One question he urged faculty to ponder is “What are students doing these days?” Earlier intervention, particularly by observing behavioral changes in the classroom, could be particularly helpful. Interfacing with Residence Life through the use of UMW Cares would allow staff to “go to where they live.” The Behavioral Intervention Teams, under the direction of Dean of Student Life Cedric Rucker, can be useful in “pattern assessment” and information diffusion to the faculty on behavioral trends among students.
4. Mr. McCarthy noted that the discussion should not just focus on negative issues. He highlighted the important role of “sports education” in the lives of many students, and emphasized that coaches are also educators.
5. Heidi Simpson, Associate Director of the Student Health Center, discussed the struggle with the concept of “wellness” among students and asked “How should students receive this?” She indicated that the current methods have the aura of a “toxic approach.”

6. Courtney Chapman, newly-minted Director of the Leadership Coordination Strategic Initiative, pointed out the need for proactive programming linked to classroom content. She cited the ability of faculty to reinforce practical applications through “direct syllabus interaction.” She also recommended more experiential applications and enhancements of “what happens in the classroom.”
7. Christina Eggenberger, Associate Director of Student Activities and Community Service, said that her office was both eager and willing to be a “service matchmaker” for faculty interested in adding service components to their courses.
8. Bob Liebau, Associate Director of Campus Recreation and the Fitness Center, as well as coordinator of the UMW Wellness Team (which also includes Dr. Riley, Dr. Tuttle and the CAPS Director) reiterated that “we are all educators” and commented on the possible cataloguing, for educational purposes, of the weekly radio program devoted to wellness issues.
9. Priscilla Sullivan, National Testing Coordinator, pressed for increasing the interactions between students based on the Stafford campus and those in Fredericksburg.
10. Vice President Searcy described the importance of both faculty and staff serving as continual advocates, not just of learning, but also of the basics of safety and security. He also talked about the possibility of developing “living and learning” centers in the renovated Randolph and Mason dormitories.

As the group discussion drew to a close, Mr. McCarthy noted that “this is just the opening of the dialogue.”

Following the luncheon discussion (and many thanks to Student Affairs for feeding the committee!!), a brief session was held to select possible student members for inclusion on the committee. Discussion as to whether this committee would recommend that students have voting rights on the UFC was deferred to a later date.

The meeting was adjourned at 13h49, with our next meeting scheduled for Friday, 28 October 2011 at 13h in the Wellness Room of the Fitness Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Hubbard