Commission on Student Affairs
February 7, 2008
3:30-5:30 p.m.
Brush Mountain A & B
Squires Student Center

Minutes


Absent: Ron Daniel, Michael Dunleavy, John Kane, Frances Keene, Meredyth Kenney, Gary Kinder, Julie Latterell, Tanya LeRoith, Cristina Lugo, Margaret McQuain, Stephen Rong, Robert Sebek, Ed Spencer, John Gray Williams

Guests: Nicki Cantrell, Kanitta Charoensiri, Kevin Finelli, Ray Plaza, Kristen Swanson

I. Call to Order

Mr. Joe McFadden, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

There was a motion to adopt the agenda as written. The motion was seconded and approved.

III. Chair Report

Mr. McFadden reminded the commission that he is still recruiting for a CSA recorder for the remainder of the year. He also reminded the group that agenda items are due by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before each meeting and the agenda will be sent out no later than the Tuesday prior to the meeting. Mr. McFadden said that earlier in the year the commission decided against forming committees this year, but he would like to form a committee to look into the graduate student fees issue. He has discussed this with Dr. DePauw and she feels this would be a good topic for CSA to study. Specifically, graduate students are allowed to break their tuition and fees payments into four payments using the Budget Tuition Plan, but they are required to pay a $45 application fee to do this, otherwise their account is put on
hold. The committee would study this $45 fee and possibly draft a resolution that would eliminate the extra fee. Graduate students at other institutions don’t typically pay this fee. He opened the floor for nominations for chair of this committee. Mr. Brennan Shepard was nominated for chair and accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations for chair. Ms. Toni Stroter volunteered to serve on the committee. Mr. McFadden asked them to stay after the meeting to start the discussion.

IV. Guest Speakers

A. Celebration of Black History Month—Ray Plaza, Director of Diversity Issues in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, said his role during Black History Month is to plan the university MLK Celebration. Kristen Swanson, Assistant Director of Multicultural Programs and Services, said she chairs the five heritage month committees that are recognized across campus. Black History Month is the third of the heritage months that are recognized. She coordinates the committees and sends out calls for proposals to student organizations, university departments, and some community agencies for events they would like to include on the heritage month calendars. This year there are 45 events on the calendar for Black History Month. She distributed copies of the calendar to the commission. Mr. Plaza opened the floor for questions. He said the planning process starts early and they welcome any ideas for next year. They had low turnout for several recent events and they need ideas for getting the word out so the turnout will be greater in the future. It was suggested they check with student organizations about events that might be planned during the heritage months to make sure events aren’t being scheduled for the same night. Another possibility is to work collaboratively with the student organizations so their events will fit into the heritage month theme. They were encouraged to plan events that will appeal to a more diverse audience, while still serving as an educational event for those in attendance. Several on the commission felt there were too many events to choose from during Black History Month, and if the numbers of events were reduced the participation might increase. They were asked to add the commission members to the MPS listserv so they would receive e-mails about their events. Mr. McFadden thanked Mr. Plaza and Ms. Swanson for their presentation.

V. Old Business

A. BOC Constitutional Changes (2nd reading)—Ms. Lauren Davis, President of the Black Organizations Council, presented their constitutional changes for second reading. The BOC decided to update their constitution because it was outdated, unclear, and contained grammatical errors. She briefly outlined the changes that were made at the request of CSA at first reading on November 15, 2007, and responded to clarification questions. There was a motion to amend Article III—Officers, Section III to read: 1. One-half of the election results shall be based on the plurality of vote by the membership of organizations present at the General Body Meeting prior to April 14th. Each organization present shall have one vote. 2. One-half of the election results
shall be based on the plurality of vote of the current Executive Board. 3. In case of a tie the Advisor shall decide based on the credentials of the application and interview.” The motion was seconded and approved. There was a motion to approve the amendments to the BOC Constitution. The motion was seconded and approved.

VI. New Business

A. Resolution on Dismissal of Patient from Care (1st reading)—Dr. Kanitta Charoensiri, Director of Schiffert Health Center (SHC), presented the resolution for first reading. The policy is already in place at the health center, but the resolution expands and clarifies the policy. Their accreditation agency requires them to update policies on a regular basis and this one had not been updated. They benchmarked with health centers at other universities and learned these universities had more detailed policies regarding dismissal of patients from care. Their newly worded policy is more in line with other universities. Dr. Charoensiri stressed that they don’t wish to deny care and she isn’t aware of such a situation occurring in the past. However, in the event there is a situation that calls for dismissal from care, they want to make sure there are clearly stated guidelines in place. She gave some examples that would warrant dismissal: illegal use of a prescription pad; theft of prescription drugs; obtaining prescriptions and selling them illegally; misrepresentation of information; violent or aggressive behavior to health center staff, other patients, or visitors. The action portion states that employees who recognize situations that may warrant dismissal from care should refer the problem to the Director of SHC verbally, followed by a written statement and copies of any pertinent correspondence, medical records, appointment records, etc. This section also explains how the student will be informed of the action and their options, such as how to find an alternative healthcare provider. Dr. Rick Ferraro indicated they plan to edit this section to make the process more clear. The appeals section shows that the student may appeal the decision in writing and direct it to the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs.

The floor was opened for a question and answer period. They were asked if a student is dismissed from care, would they be exempt from the health fee in the future. They were unsure if this would be the case, but did stress that the dismissal may only be temporary, in which case the student would be allowed to return for health care at SHC. It was suggested they add wording to clarify the health fee issue. It was also suggested they add wording to show that rude or disruptive behavior has been a persistent problem in order to warrant dismissal. Under the section pertaining to the patient being allowed adequate time to find alternative health care, there was a question about whether someone would help them find that alternative care. They will add wording to show that every effort will be made to assist the patient in finding an alternative healthcare provider. They were also asked to clarify that the repeated failure to keep appointments is for extreme cases. They will add wording to show this.
Mr. McFadden thanked Dr. Charoensiri for the presentation and indicated second reading will take place at the February 21 meeting.

B. Graduate-Undergraduate Mentoring Program—Mr. Kevin Finelli, a third year student in Math and Physics, said he has been interested in graduate school since he arrived here as a freshman, but found that he and many other undergraduates don’t understand the graduate process. Through the Pamplin Scholars Program, he has begun plans for a graduate-undergraduate mentoring program. Some issues they would like to address are how to successfully apply to graduate school, how to choose the right program, how to obtain funding, how to find a good graduate advisor, and how to develop plans for what to do after graduate school. The first step in developing the program would be establishing a base of graduate student mentors. The second step would be advertising the program to undergraduate students. The third step would be organizing the mentoring groups and deciding whether traditional one-on-one mentoring or small group mentoring would work best. He feels it would be beneficial to also involve faculty in these mentoring relationships. Mr. Finelli then discussed why he felt there is a need for this program on campus. In talking with other undergraduates he learned that many aren’t aware of the available resources for learning about graduate school. He feels it would be helpful to have a unified program in place that would help students learn about the resources available in various departments. He also feels it is a priority to reach students who might not otherwise consider graduate school. A program such as this could create a stronger generation of graduate students from Virginia Tech. He discussed the approaches used by other schools, including on-line mentoring programs that match undergraduates with undergraduates based on criteria they enter into the program, such as the discipline they are interested in, their cultural backgrounds, or their gender. Other schools target low income students to help them prepare for Graduate School. Mr. Finelli opened the floor for questions. He was encouraged to gather information about similar programs that are already in place on campus so the groups can collaborate. Commission members felt the program would be beneficial to graduate students as well and they should be heavily recruited to participate in the program. A training program for the graduate student mentors was suggested. It was also suggested that graduate students earn one credit for serving as a mentor, as an incentive for their participation. Mr. McFadden thanked Mr. Finelli for presenting his ideas to the commission.

C. Student Legal Services 2008-09 Budget Proposal (1st reading)—Nicki Cantrell, Director of Student Activities and Chair of the Student Legal Services Board, presented the Student Legal Services 2008-2009 Budget Proposal for first reading. Last year there was concern about the future funding of Student Legal Services (SLS). In previous years, SLS requested funds from the Student Budget Board (SBB). This became a problem because approximately 75 percent of the SGA budget request was devoted to Student Legal Services. As a result, SGA’s other programs were not receiving sufficient funds from the Student Budget Board. In addition, the SBB was not able to reduce the budget for Student Legal Services because it employs an independent contractor who provides a vital service to the students. Due to those two concerns the Student Legal Services Board
conducted research of the student body to determine the value of this program to the students. The overwhelming response was that the program is an important service for the students. The SLS Board proposed to CSA last year that funding for SLS would come off the top of the Student Activity Fee allocation for student organizations. This would provide stability to SLS and would not affect any organizations' ability to be funded. The funding change was approved by CSA. The only change in the budget for 2008-2009 is a proposed pay increase of 3.5% for the attorney since he has not received an increase for two years. There were no questions and Mr. McFadden announced that second reading will take place on February 21.

VII. Open Forum

Mr. McFadden asked the current student representatives to the Board of Visitors to make their announcements. Mr. Brennan Shepard, Graduate Representative, announced that applications are being accepted for next year’s graduate and undergraduate representatives. The application deadline is 5:00 p.m. on February 15. Applications will be reviewed and the top six candidates for each position will be interviewed. The pool will be narrowed to three candidates for each position, who will interview with the Board of Visitors at the March 31 meeting. Applications and eligibility requirements are available on the Division of Student Affairs website: www.dsa.vt.edu. Mr. Ryan Smith, Undergraduate Representative, encouraged students to apply for these positions because the applicant pool has been low the last few years. He pointed out that the nominating committee for the undergraduate position is made up entirely of undergraduate members of CSA and he hopes that all undergraduates from the commission will participate this year. Anyone who is interested in serving on the nominating committee should contact him. Dr. Hikes added that both positions are very important to the university. At each Board of Visitors meeting, the two student representatives make constituency reports on behalf of their constituency groups and the entire student body. They are very influential positions with high visibility. Members of the Board look to them for advice and recommendations. The Board has been disappointed in the past that the number of applicants was rather low. She encouraged the students and members of their organizations to apply for these positions.

VIII. Announcements

Ms. Monica Hunter distributed an information piece—a comparison of categories from the Student Budget Board and the Registered Student Organization Budget Board, listing what the groups requested from last year through this year.

Mr. Marshaun Glover announced that the Black Graduate Student Organization would be hosting the Ebony Affair on February 22, 7:00-11:00 p.m., at the Holiday Inn.

Ms. Jessica Brunson announced that National Panhellenic Council is accepting applications for four $500 scholarships. Applications will be accepted from February 11-27. Undergraduates who are interested may contact Ms. Brunson at
NPHC-VT@vt.edu. The scholarships will be presented at the Overton Stepshow on March 14 in Burruss Hall.

Mr. Adeel Khan announced that a fundraiser will be held for the students of Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, who lost nearly everything in their dorm rooms after a tornado struck their campus on February 5. More information about their needs will be available later and a banner about the fundraiser will be placed in the lobby of Squires.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Sanzenbach
Recording Secretary