MINUTES

COMMISSION ON STUDENT AFFAIRS

October 24, 2002
Room 219
Squires Student Center
3:30-5:30 p.m.


ABSENT: Susan Anderson, Lanny Cross, Kevin Eley, Grant Hill, Theresa Kanter, Matt Lehman, Myron McClees, Jerry Niles, Kerry Redican

GUESTS: Brian McNeill, Jody Thompson, Catherine Martin

I. Call to Order

Mr. Brian Montgomery, Chair, called the meeting to order.

II. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as written.

III. Minutes from October 10th meeting

Mr. Montgomery announced that the minutes of the October 10 CSA meeting have been electronically approved with one correction and will be sent to University Council for approval.

IV. Old Business

a.) Review and division of top issues

Mr. Montgomery distributed a handout showing the issues that CSA members would like to cover this year. He discussed the list of issues and asked for volunteers to serve as committee chairs or members. Mr. Montgomery will compile the list of volunteers and be in touch with those who are willing to serve on a committee.

b.) Residential and Dining Programs & Residence Hall Federation Smoking Policy Resolution

Mr. Vivek Mehta and Dr. Ed Spencer presented the RDP & RHF Smoking Policy Resolution for second reading. As a follow-up to the first reading on October 10, they reviewed the reasons for the smoking policy resolution before opening the floor for questions. Dr. Spencer said they don’t anticipate problems with the proposed
smoking policy changes because most students are cooperative in keeping university policies. This change will also protect those with smoke allergies who didn’t have a policy that protected them. There were questions concerning how many smokers versus non-smokers responded to their survey. Mr. Mehta indicated that 15.1% of survey respondents were smokers, which is higher than the number of smokers in the general population (13%). The majority of smokers also voted to make the residence halls non-smoking facilities. Mr. Mehta said they gave many options on the smoking choices in order to keep the survey bias free.

Several students expressed concern that the smoking policy will also affect the Oak Lane Community. This issue was discussed at a recent SGA senate meeting and many felt that Oak Lane should be allowed to establish their own smoking policy because their constituency is different from the other residence halls. Dr. Spencer said that there is more likelihood that the smoke will drift in Oak Lane due to their particular ventilation system. He also feels we should protect the individual members of the Oak Lane Community as well. Mr. Mehta pointed out that the Oak Lane Community is a Virginia Tech residence hall, rented by fraternities and sororities, and the university is still the landlord. There was also concern that the survey was not representative of the Oak Lane Community, but Mr. Mehta said that Oak Lane represented 3% of the survey vote, and it makes up 6% of the students living on campus. Of those respondents, 46% don’t smoke in their own rooms, and 66% thought residents shouldn’t be allowed to smoke in their own rooms. Several students felt that the no-smoking policy should be limited to the rooms at Oak Lane, and allow the groups to make the policies concerning the common areas. Dr. Spencer said that the Manual of Greek Housing can list an exception for smoking in common areas, just as they have an exception for alcohol in the common areas.

Mr. Vivek Mehta made a motion to adopt the smoking policy and forward it to University Council. The motion was seconded and approved.

c.) Panhellenic Council Constitutional Changes Second Reading

Ms. Angela Wilson presented the Panhellenic Council Constitutional Changes for second reading. There was a motion to approve the changes. The motion was seconded and approved.

d.) LGBTA Constitutional Changes Second Reading

Mr. Jeremy Andrews presented the LGBTA Constitutional Changes for second reading. Following a brief question and answer period, there was a motion to approve the changes. The motion was seconded and approved.

V. New Business

a.) University Council Updates:

i. Commission for Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Mr. Brian Montgomery announced that the resolution to establish the Commission for Equal Opportunity and Diversity was passed at the October 21 University Council meeting. The resolution to determine membership on the new
commission was also passed on October 21. Student membership of the new commission will consist of one from GSA, two from SGA, and one representing CSA. The commission will have a total of 30 members and will go into effect after the November 11 Board of Visitors meeting if passed by the Board.

ii. New programs in Biomedical Engineering

Mr. Montgomery announced that the resolution to establish the Virginia Tech-Wake Forest University Biomedical Engineering M.S. and Ph.D. degrees was passed at the October 21 University Council meeting and will go to the Board of Visitors on November 11.

iii. Name change for College of Human Resources and Education

Mr. Montgomery also announced that a resolution to rename the College of Human Resources & Education to the College of Human Sciences & Education was introduced for first reading. Second reading was scheduled to take place at the November 4 University Council meeting.

VI. Announcements

Mr. Vivek Mehta announced that the Residence Hall Federation was hosting an on-campus Halloween celebration for elementary school students on October 31.

Mr. Allan Bradley announced that plans are underway for the Maroon Effect shirt sales for the Virginia Tech/University of Virginia football game on November 30. Shirt prices will be around $10.

Ms. Kim Mitchell announced that the Living Buddhism Club would be sponsoring the visit of seven Tibetan Monks on campus from October 23-29.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Montgomery adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Sanzenbach
Recording Secretary