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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Student Life Committee, Tuesday, December 3, 2013

Arts & Sciences Student Life Committee

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**Student Life Committee
Warden Dining Room
December 3, 2013**

In attendance:

Members: Yusheng Yao, Ed Leffler, Alex Grimm, Claire Strom, Jana Mathews, Scott Rubarth, Adriana Talbot, Robert Salmeron, Gabe Anderson, Rachel Newcomb, Zeynep Teymuroglu

Guests: Joan Davison, Norah Perez, Nate Weyant, Ken Miller

I. Annual Athletics Report from Nate Weyant

Yusheng asked about why we need such a report. Joan Davison responded that best practices for institutional control over athletic departments suggest that annual reports to faculty should take place. It is good to show that school is monitoring practices in case there are incidents.

Nate Weyant reported on successes of the 2012-13 school year, including a 94% academic success rate, received Division 2 award last year, top conference in terms of graduation rates, 8 All Americans, 10 advanced to NCAA post-season tournaments. He mentioned many other high points for athletics, both athletically and academically.

Claire Strom asked how academic success is measured.

Joan Davison responded that Rollins follows NCAA guidelines, which can be found on NCAA website – graduation within six years, along with other requirements. Standards are changing – junior college transfers will have to have a 2.2 rather than a 2.0.

Nate mentioned initiatives they are working on include “get connected” cards – in response to Sandspur article on apathy around campus, and connecting better through social media

Scott Rubarth suggested students could invite their professors, have professors mention it in class – he hasn’t been invited to an event in six years. Are there ways to get professors more involved? Several others echoed this concern.

Nate said they’re working on this; there’s a committee to start initiatives next semester. Joan mentioned initiatives on other campuses.

Ed Leffler asked whether the athletic program plans on extending additional benefits to athletes – such as preferential registration. Joan said this isn’t up to the athletic department to decide, though it would be useful because of the challenges of organizing course schedules around sports practice. Claire Strom reported that Academic Affairs Council would be the ones deciding this. Joan says one preferential issue is that athletes get to drop/add 24 hours before other students.

Ed mentioned schedule communication issues between RCC classes and athletes. He brought up issue of preferential parking with stickers. Rachel Newcomb said that would be tough because we already have issues with parking, esp. near the Alford Sports Center.

Joan replied that students always have challenges communicating about absences with professors, but that athletes do better than most. It's harder even for adjuncts or visitors who don't understand the athletic absence issue and aren't informed about the policies, so students often may fail because of this.

Robert Salmeron asked whether any of the facilities will be renovated. Nate replied that they're looking at the soccer field, how to expand the weight room.

Ed said SGA is also interested in studying the opening hours for the dining service facilities because open hours are not necessarily the same as when athletes get out of their practices.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved for Oct. 29 and Nov. 19.

III. Norah Perez – Office of Student Employment

Norah Perez came to talk about employment on campus. Office has been open almost two years now, in response to concerns that student employment didn't respond to service excellence standards in place elsewhere. Committee was formed, and at that time, it was discovered that there was no central process in place, students were treated differently across campus, paperwork was not in order, etc. Over six months, that committee recommended formation of Office of Student Employment, which was formed in 2012. Takes ownership of student employment to rest in one specific place, to bring more accountability. Phase 1 was to ensure compliance with federal regulations and to revamp new hire process. Before, work study students could sign up under Foxlink, choosing departments you wanted to work for. Financial Aid office would then place students in different departments. Problem was that students weren't interested in working, often were placed in a department and wouldn't show up. If you were a department-funded student, there was no way to get a job on campus, because students had to go department to department and asked.

They decided to model new hire process in the same way that people would search for jobs – with applications and interviews. In the past, staff used to have to fill out a personnel action form, which is sent over to human resources, to determine whether students needed to do new hire paperwork or not. Now, this office takes care of that, and students can't work until their office has sent out the work authorization email, which shows that everything has been processed correctly. This has been a huge culture shift, multiple trainings for supervisors, surveys of student employees and supervisors to find out what issues students faced in student employment, and what were the improvements.

Last year they started evaluations of students and supervisors. Student employees are all working on improving their responsibility, communication, customer service, and initiative, to highlight their transferrable skills.

Phase 2, roll out of evaluations, pre and post assessments in terms of where they are with experience and growth. At end of year, there's a self-reflection on their learning and growth. They are working on helping students see how their work can translate to future employment, showing employers that they are accountable and responsible.

Zeynep asks how we can request work-study students. Norah says they can reach out to her office to request a work-study student. Rollins has lost 25% in work study funding and has helped departments cut services, more recently, another 10% loss. Norah has a wait list of departments.

550-600 students work on campus, earning about \$1.2 million dollars per academic year.

Ed Leffler asks what Norah does on a daily basis in her office.

In a typical day, they are processing applications, reaching out to students to get them to complete paperwork. Last year, they processed between 3-400 new student paperwork in an office of two. She is also working on the career and life planning committee pilot program, which is a big part of Phase 2. Resumes are now mandatory for on campus jobs.

Ed asks whether they are meeting with Career Services to discuss best practices. She says no, they don't currently do this. He asks if they work together in terms of a task force. She says student affairs meet as a division once a month, and directors meet once a month as well.

Zeynep asks about whether international students have priority (they don't), and what percent of job applications actually can be funded. Norah answered that there are more positions open this year than usual, that have gone unfilled.

Norah asks how the communication with students is going. Jana Mathews suggests targeted emails sent to particular departments.

Ed asks if they're part of orientation. Norah says they did virtual video orientation over the summer, and they table here in the campus center and students have to stop by with their "passports." Gabe mentions they are on a lot of panels for accepted students.

Ed asks what is the process for students to be terminated. Norah deals with that, there's a process for it now, and a student employee handbook, also timecard fraud awareness is stressed. For supervisors and students, there are different processes.

Yusheng asks if SGA has anything to ask.

Ed Leffler says they are meeting with President Duncan tomorrow. Brooke Pankau will be replaced by new chair of SGA Student Life, Gianna Hernandez.

Yusheng says that Ken Miller is here to answer further questions, following up on last meeting, had invited a different person to get a different perspective. Ken is here as the representative of the campus.

Robert brings up the issue of escorts. Ken says the numbers have gone up significantly. Interested in engaging Greek community to serve as escorts. Robert asks if there are other solutions, is there liability with students picking up students? Ken says they'll see if any issues come up – you still want people to feel comfortable and utilize escorts.

Ed apologizes for not dealing with the proper lines of communication. He asks Ken to go over budget process. Ken says budget doesn't move very much. Additional funding has come through capital budget.

Ed says that there is a perception that Campus Safety's demeanor and interactions with students are not as friendly as it could be. Ken says he thinks they're fine. They are often having to deal with students who are paying fines or buying parking permits, as opposed to coming in for friendly interactions. Ed asks if peer or aspirant schools measure the same things. Ken says other schools don't tend to ask for this information.

Ed asks whether they've thought about going into living learning communities and interacting with students. He says they do that already – cooked lunches for fraternities and sororities, attended barbecues, sponsored children at Holiday Fun Fest, etc. He invites SGA to come talk to him about parking.

Robert asks progress on the lot – it is being built over the break.

Adriana suggests people should have to ask for a reason they need an escort. Ken didn't want to change this in the middle of the semester but they are going to deal with this next semester.

Ed wants to express his thanks and state that he represents SGA's interests, and that they can bring these concerns and issues back to SGA and it's a two-way street.

Meeting adjourned 1:50 pm.