

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
STUDENT RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Friday, February 26, 2021
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM
Virtual via Zoom

Invited: Gina Cervetti, Harish Ganesh, Helen Look, Jeannie Moody-Novak, Judith Beck, Mariah Fiumara, Yaacov Ritov, Amanda Peters, Kentaro Toyama, Jill Esau, Cindy Leung, Dunham Clark, MaryJo Banasik, Noah Zimmerman, Vincent Alessi, Jennifer Schrage, Martino Harmon, Charlie Koopman, Colleen Conway
Administrative: Pam Morris

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Chair Cervetti called the meeting to order. Minutes approved as written.

2. Discussion

Dr. Harmon is looking forward to the dialogue. We have hope and optimism, but must focus on safety. Many different opinions from parents, staff, faculty, students and other constituents.

Topic: Re-entry Needs for Students for Fall 2021 (inside and outside of the classroom)

Focus: Thriving in the Second Year (what will our second-year students need)

Key Questions - As we look toward "new" normal of Fall 2021:

- What re-entry programming should we consider?
- What will be some pain-points for the reintegration experience for students?
- How can we help students feel comfortable and safe?
- How should we get feedback from students that will influence our expectations and planning for the Fall 2021?
- What types of resources/toolkits can we provide staff and faculty to ensure support for students?
 - Offer FYE programming for second year that missed them, more celebratory or ceremonial opportunities. Welcome week. Library is considering repeated programming since many second year or online only students will be entering buildings for first time.
 - First year students missed familiarity of campus and classroom norms. Would like to see their first year repeated as second year. Students will be grateful for the experiences, not offended. Understand that second year students need time to learn things that they missed out on. It takes a large time investment to learn how to connect individuals to professors and opportunities that they may have in-person, seen as posters, or opted into listservs.
 - Building access issues for FY students and lack of experience of where they can access spaces i.e. study areas. Suggested to widely communicate once buildings and spaces open to aid in that catch-up of campus familiarity.

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- Connect with students that did come on campus, but are still isolated due to the low density.
- Faculty want in-person learning, so keeping up hand sanitizing stations, tents for students and/or for departments to offer welcome events. Folks tend to feel safer when outside.
- Per Dr. Harmon safety precautions will still be in place for the fall.
- How does orientation look for the future? Not the same, smaller celebrations, possibly.
- Interesting to see what the demand will be for online after return to campus. Maybe a positive side to continue to serve both sides of audience – in person and virtual since participation rates seemed to have increased for some programs.
- Students in need often have many university touch points to get assistance. Support students with resource points for spring/summer to combat the often reported feeling of loneliness and looking for more events. Communicate access to resources. Reading clubs. What resources should students be pointed to?
- Need to inform students when buildings/spaces start to open up, especially following the press regarding the closing due to spiders.
- Is it possible to have UM students to meet each other in their geographical area? Student Life is looking to expand summer cohort matching model with upper class/underclass by zip code. On the radar to have a “Thriving in the Second Year-type” programming.
- Can connect with Alumni association to have them connect with students that are in their area. Many alumni are interested.
- Clubs meeting remotely and having good experiences. Going virtual helped them to feel that they are staying connected.
- Student orgs want to interact and are reaching out to incoming students that have been accepted. Some student orgs are hosting reach out events. Incoming students report that this is unique to Michigan and may make a difference in their final decision to attend.
- Looking for suggestions to keep grad students engaged. Coffee shops are offered as writing workshops in SOE. Faculty pay for coffee for attending students for a local coffee shop. Attendance is making it expensive for faculty.
- Messaging to parents? Thinking about parent’s concerns as well as students. Family Matters communication can be used to set expectations for Fall 21. Moving in direction of a “return to normal” or “new normal”.
- Students really need to feel welcomed, loved, embraced and what programming are schools looking at?
- Can we expect students to have anxiety? Will they know how to regulate their emotions? Time management? Feel safe?
- Many students have expressed the difficulties of learning virtually. Students are looking forward to being back on campus and some-what normalcy. Easier to learn in person then remotely. Can’t wait for the return of study abroad opportunities.

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3. General SL Updates

May need to continue to change direction while learning and planning. Fall will be focused on making connections by taking a collaborative approach with schools and colleges to encourage those connections. First 6 weeks will be challenging for both first year and second year students. Housing and dining are identifying scenarios for fall planning. Need communications to go out to students soon regarding housing contracts and setting expectations that there will be quarantine housing, social distancing and reduced density in housing. Vaccines are coming into the scenario for housing decisions. Wanting to get back to a new normal for Fall 2021, but have to balance the optimism with reality. Cannot assume that the transition will be natural and normal. Must have support measures in place, such as:

- How to form connections
- How to inform about mental health issues

Unit directors have experienced that some virtual programs are more successful, but some of the core work must be done in person. Optimistic that they have the opportunity to rethink their programs based on the gathered knowledge.

4. Wrap-up/Adjournment

Harish Ganesh made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Judith Beck seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.