

To: SACUA

From: Jessica Pasquale, Chair, Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC)

Subject: Report on Activities of Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC) for 2022-2023

Members: Marna Clowney-Robinson, Ashley Gearhardt, Anouck Girard, Marita Inglehart, Charlie Koopman, Laura MacLatchy, Amanda Peters, David Potter, Lily Collins (student)

SACUA Liaison: Simon Cushing

Meeting Dates: September 16, 2022; October 21, 2022; November 11, 2022; December 16, 2022; January 20, 2023; February 17, 2023; March 17, 2023; April 21, 2023

Committee Charge

The Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC) advises and consults with the Vice President of Student Life, Dr. Martino Harmon, concerning topics of interest at the intersection of faculty and student concern.

SPECIFIC CHARGE 2022 – 2023

1. Discuss strategic priorities such as advancing DEI including how faculty may be responsive.
2. Discuss and provide feedback on academic policies affecting student mental health.
3. Discuss expanded initiatives to support students and their families.
4. Discuss ways to enhance collaborative conversations across the campus community about topics of concern and strategies that promote a healthy campus social climate.

Committee Actions

At our September meeting, Director of Strategic Initiatives for Student Life, Will Sherry, presented a review of DEI 1.0 and an overview of DEI 2.0 planning efforts within Student Life. Committee members present in person received a tour of the renovated Ruthven building, including the new Testing Accommodations Center from Ruthven Facilities manager, Shannon Meeks.

In October, Dr. Neeraja Arvamudan, the Director of the Ginsberg Center, spoke to the committee about preparations for elections, democratic engagement, and other community engagement efforts. Members who were present in person also received a tour of the (soon to be demolished and rebuilt) Ginsberg Center from Dr. Aravamudan.

At our November meeting, Kelly Dunlop, Interfaith Lead for the Center for Campus Involvement, presented on the Association of Religious Counselors (ARC) and students Amelia Popowics and Annelise Rice spoke to the committee about the work of the LSA Student Government's Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention Task Force. Afterward, members who were present in person received a tour of the Trotter Multicultural Center from its Associate Director, Kellyn Mackerl-Cooper.

In December, Dr. Lindsey Mortenson, Chief Mental Health Officer, Marsha Benz, Wellness Coaching and Motivational Interviewing Lead for Wolverine Wellness, and Dr. Todd Sevig, Director of CAPS, updated the committee on Student Mental Health Initiatives. Tom Lehker, Ombudsperson, and Judith Pennywell, Director of the International Center, presented to the committee about the work of the Mental Health Implementation Work Team on Academic Policies. The committee members who attended in person received a tour of University Health Service (UHS) Building from Dr. Mortenson.

At our January meeting, AVP of Student Life, Dr. Connie Tingson Gatz, presented new updates in the Student Development, Learning and Social Change Education portfolio. Members present in person were taken on a tour of the Student Activities Building, including the University Career Center (UCC), International Center, and the Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR).

In February, Rob Yurk and Kambiz Khalili gave the committee an update on Capital Projects, specifically the Ginsberg Center, the Central Campus Recreation Building (CCRB), and other Housing and Dining updates.

At the March meeting, Associate Dean of Students Sarah Daniels briefed the committee on protocols for handling protests, and how their office support requests for demonstrations on campus. Associate Dean of Students Nicole Banks presented on the efforts being made to Expanded Parent/Family Engagement.

In April, Dr. Janel Sutkus, Director of Student Life Research, presented to the committee a First-year Foundations Study report. Allen Sheffield, Associate Director of SAAS, also gave the committee an overview of the newly restructured Student Accessibility and Accommodation Services (SAAS) unit, which includes the Adaptive Sports & Fitness Program and the testing and Accommodation Centers, in addition to the existing Services for Students with Disabilities.

Information Obtained

In our first meeting there was some discussion about the faculty [syllabus insert](#) created by the Faculty Senate Sexual Misconduct Working Group that was circulated at the beginning of the fall term. While all agreed that this insert was a good step forward in trying to prevent inappropriate faculty/student interactions, we realized that students were not made aware that the insert was being recommended to faculty. Dr. Harmon confirmed in the next committee meeting that going forward, this information would be shared with students during new student orientation.

The Ginsberg Center currently works with nearly 400 community partners, connecting their priorities with UM partners and resources. The Ginsberg Center “prepares students, faculty, and staff to create socially just community engagement experiences” and is perfectly positioned to lead initiatives in this area for President Ono’s Vision 2034. Their “[Pathways to Civic Engagement for Academic Partners](#)” document is a great resource for faculty and should be shared more broadly.

A highlight of touring the Student Activities Building after our January meeting was seeing and learning more about the University Career Center's Clothes Closet, which allows students to try on and select business and professional attire for free. The Clothes Closet primarily is supported by ongoing donations of clothes from campus and community members.

Recommendations

Dr. Tingson Gatz's presentation at the January meeting on the Student Development, Learning and Social Change Education portfolio provided a great overview of the work of OSL, and may be better placed at the beginning of the next academic year, especially for new committee members.

An element of the committee charge for 22-23, "Discuss ways to enhance collaborative conversations across the campus community about topics of concern and strategies that promote a healthy campus social climate" is something this committee should continue to focus on in the next academic year.

So many resources and events offered and advertised to students are unknown to faculty and staff, which limits the number of people interacting directly with students on a day-to-day basis who can recommend or suggest these resources. This committee recommends that the Office of Student Life explore increasing the frequency with which student services are communicated to non-student audiences on campus. Though we realize there is much overlap between Student Life and the services offered by individual Schools and Colleges, in this case, we feel that more information is better. This also applies to information communicated to faculty that has a direct impact on students (such as the situation with the syllabus insert described above), which may require the Faculty Senate Office and/or SACUA to coordinate more messaging with the Office of Student Life in the future.