Student Relations Advisory Committee

Friday, January 30, 2004

Bates Room – Michigan Union

12:00-1:30pm

Present: Jong-Jin Kim, Barbara MacAdam (Chair), Al Burdi, Royster Harper, Simone Taylor, Annette Haines, Susan Hollar, Jesse Knight, Tiffany Pak

Absent: Frank Cianciola, Martin Gold, Marilynn Rosenthal, Jens Zorn, Gregg Gunnell, Carl Akerlof, Ed Willis

Guest: Keith Elkin

Meeting began at 12:15pm

1. Approval of Minutes from 10.10.03 and 12.12.03 meetings

   October minutes approved

   December minutes approved

2. Greek Life Discussion Follow-up

   Vice President Harper provided a brief synopsis of where the University stands on the Greek Life Strategic Planning:

   There are three recommendations for the Greek Life Strategic Planning Process

   1. Have at least one year of deferred rush

   2. Fraternities and sororities should have a more academic focus

   3. Have students spend two years in the residence hall

   *All three recommendations are linked together (i.e. living two years in the residence halls will ultimately delay rush)

   *Deferred rush is good for academic advancement
*Financial implications are of concern*

Hazing: the University needs to review and strengthen the hazing policy. This requires working with the state to get rid of hazing, incorporate a live-in advisor, etc. There already seems to be a desire to implement similar policies on the Greek community, the word needs to get out to students. As for time, we are looking towards Fall 2005 (3 working terms) to see implementations.

Students are not happy because they feel they are not being involved in the changes. Since the process has started, we are in the third group of student leaders (which is possibly why they were not involved from the beginning because of the fast turn over of student leaders)

Vice President Harper believes in potential of the Greek system, but the current system needs to change. The University needs to help students correct: it would not be by their best interest if the students try to take care of it by themselves.

Jesse Knight gives the students’ viewpoint on the Greek Life initiative:

The “Secret Document” issue from the Michigan Daily felt like and looked like the final process for change, when it was only the beginning. It was simply a pre-work item being passed on by a colleague, which lead to the miscommunication between students and staff.

Casey Bourke (IFC President) intends to work more with the administration. He views that the handling of the secret document situation was not done appropriately.

Leadership in Greek changes in January. This makes it hard to work together with the University, because they do not know what happened in the past, and that is why they feel like they are not involved.

Overall, representatives from MSA, LSA Student Government, friends, and leadership of IFC/Pan Hellenic have mixed views about deferred rush.

- Some view that deferred rush is not a bad idea – other schools are doing it, and it would be better for academics

- Others think the current system is working fine

- Financial issues and the impact on housing on campus may be a threat to the Greek system

- Weather is also an important factor: Fall will make it easier to get people out
- These perspectives are largely uninformed opinions: Greek leaders should get information out to the students
- There is a willingness to dialogue and work with administration to address tensions

What are the key points of tension? What can the committee do to help?

- Students need to believe and they must be heard
- Should a working group be made to address the issues? Should different communities be asked to get opinions about the issues?
- Issue is not just about hazing, but more towards a different academic experience
- How should it be done to get out of the ‘us/they’ mode?
- Let students know that the report which the students worked on is not being discarded

Committee responses

- What are perceptual/actual barriers to change?
- SACUA is willing to have Senate Assembly look at these issues (to involve faculty more in the dialogue)
- Next step might be to think of ways that we can engage the campus in thoughtful dialogue (to get rid of inaccurate perceptions)

Keith Elkin’s input

- Students seem to be dissuaded from coming forward
- The Alcohol issue should be enforced in a systematic and educational way
- What are the compelling needs to the student’s interests?

3. “Get out the Vote” Role for SRAC/DSA?

“Get out the Vote” is a campus wide effort to encourage students to vote, so they will exercise their rights. This campaign makes it educational and easy for students to vote!

What can we do to encourage and help students to vote?
• MSA has a “Get out the Vote” campaign, which is a peer outreach effort. It is
done in a way that is not partisan: the University might possibly want to join in on
the program.
• Idea to have somebody come to our March meeting to talk to SRAC about the
program and see how the University can contribute.
• We could possibly have President Coleman address the voting issue to get the
whole university (students, faculty, staff) to vote.
• Make it clear that it is a student effort to reach students!

4. Update from Student Affairs from Vice President Harper

*Questions to keep in mind: When is the time to act? What are the needs in the
community, and is this the time to get work done?

Currently, SAPAC strongly encourages students to be smart and safe about sexual assault
issues. The crisis line will be staffed by Safe House Professionals (24 hours). There has
been strengthening done on CAPS, with more people trained to provide help on sexual
assaults. The goal for SAPAC to strengthen peer education, the need for strong men’s
advocacy group, and cultural issues still need to be addressed.

Renovation of William Monroe Trotter House

Facility enhancement – there is a student task team that has convened to talk about
what they want to see in Trotter House

In April, the goal is to have the committee suggest what we want to see in Trotter
House also.

University Unions

Find a sustaining funding model for the Unions

Past was a patching model: if you bleed, we patch. The problem is that it
eventually catches up with us: all groups are asking for funding!

What is the real work being done about diversity?

Students are saying that they still do not get the authentic experience

We need to create integrated and meaningful approaches

We also need to strengthen the research agenda

North Campus: How can we create a sense of community? There are a lot of students
there. Get transportation issue fixed in North Campus! The goal is to be more
sensitive and responsive to the North Campus community.
In the March meeting, we will talk about Married/Grad Housing and mental/physical care of graduate students.

5. Student/MSA issues – Knight

- Let MSA know that the changes in SAPAC now strengthens the credibility and professionalism of the counseling services
- Safe Ride should be promoted to students
- Fear that major programs will be lost due to budget cuts
- Work on Homecoming next Fall – more events to go on before and after the game

Meeting Adjourned at 1:48pm

Minutes submitted by

Tiffany Pak

SACUA SRAC Student Intern