Minutes of Meeting – 8 February 2002

Members Present: Alphonse Burdi (chair), Frank Cianciola, Royster Harper, Colin Heitzmann, Jong-Jin Kim, Patricia King, Barbara MacAdam, Rich Mayk, Melissa Mercer, Pete Podein, Karen Reiman-Sendi, Simone H. Taylor, Jane Leu (staff)

Members Absent: Brian Coppola, Gary Faerber, Nicole Pinkard, Margaret Terpenning

Guest(s): Linda Gillum, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, Lester Monts, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Bill Zeller, Director of Housing, Mary Hummel, Associate Director of Housing - Learning Initiatives

Chair Burdi opened the meeting at 12:12 pm and warmly welcomed the guests and members in attendance. Following a round of introductions, Professor Burdi thanked members for agenda items and showed members the literature they could pick up before leaving (2001-2002 University Policies Handbook for Students, The University of Michigan Faculty Handbook Fall 2001, Principles of Faculty Involvement in Institutional and Academic Unit Governance at The University of Michigan).

Review of the minutes of 11 January was delayed until those guests had reviewed them. The agenda items for this meeting were approved with a change in order.

Linda Gillum brought back the final report of the President’s Commission on the Undergraduate Experience for continued discussion. It was emphasized that the report is not a blueprint of how to proceed. It will be used as a vehicle to open dialog around the campus with faculty, students, and staff. Lester Monts added that the Undergraduate Council will be charged to carry out campus dialogs. Vice President Harper indicated that SRAC opinion of the report and discussion of undergraduate education and what it should be is very important. Bill Zeller indicated that all undergraduates have a connection with the residence halls. In their first year residence halls offer students structure and support in the transition from high school to college. Eighty percent of the sophomores stay in a group living situation (residence halls or the
Lester Monts provided a brief history of the President’s Commission on the Undergraduate Experience. He summarized the recommendations from the Interim President and Interim Provost regarding the work that will be done over the next two months by the Undergraduate Council. He indicated that there will be funding to get these projects started—they may be part of the M-Campaign. Lester will be the convener of the Undergraduate Council. The Undergraduate Council will be composed of faculty, staff, and students. There may need to be additional teams or ad hoc groups to work on the implementation of ideas that are developed. Lester recognized the excellence currently in place, and indicated this work is part of continuous improvement. Input from graduate students about their undergraduate experiences at many institutions has not yet been tapped, but Lester recognized their value and will be seeking such input. Lester indicated that current work with parent communications has been considered for part of the process. Lester is also looking into academic integrity and consistency across the campus. He plans to tap SRAC as part of this project.

As part of his update on the progress of Residential Life Initiatives, Bill Zeller distributed the slides of his PowerPoint presentation along with copies of Michigan Learning Communities 2001-2002: Opening Doors to Learning and Residence Hall Neighborhoods: University Housing at the University of Michigan. Bill pointed out the key words “learning-centered” and “partnership” in the University Housing mission statement:

“To create and sustain diverse learning-centered residential communities that further the goals of the University. Through partnership with others, we provide quality programs, services, and facilities for those we serve in a caring, responsible, and cost-effective manner.”

Bill reported that they are engaged in the concept work, analysis of sites, and financial analysis of the new hall along with comprehensive assessment of infrastructure renewal needs and initiated plans for fire and life safety code compliance. East Quad/Residential College Design Initiative will be a prototype of the transformation of all halls into living-learning centers. The Cheever House Proposal, an international living-learning program for female undergraduate students focused on global leadership issues, and the Observatory Lodge GSI Proposal are two new living-learning proposals. Site visits to residence halls at Cornell, UNC, and Maryland have been productive in thinking about ideal residence hall design.

Mary Hummel reported on the workshop she and Patricia King co-chaired which was charged with developing principles and a framework for the undergraduate student experience in residence halls for the purpose of guiding new facility design, renovations, program development and implementation, and staff/student expectations. They developed four principles:

1) Residence Education must involve students in creating and sustaining inclusive communities in the residence halls in which the students themselves learn to participate and take responsibility.
2) The residence halls and residence education specifically, should provide a critical nexus between the in and out of classroom experience for undergraduate students.

3) Students’ experiences in residence halls should complement their other university experiences in ways that are consistent with the university’s learning mission, ideals, and long-standing tradition of promoting excellence and leadership.

4) Students in the residence halls should have opportunities to participate in a wide variety of learning experiences that help them develop in cognitive, personal, social, and spiritual domains.

Mary sought reactions from SRAC members and got support for the good work being done through residence learning initiatives. Rich Mayk expressed interest in why students leave the residence halls and the possible impact of this on changes. Bill Zeller indicated that he would like to see an increase in the number of sophomores returning to group living situations, residence halls and the Greek system. Housing is beginning to collaborate with the Greek system on residence education programs. Although during the first term of college it is a major adjustment for students to share a room, most students report at the end of the year that they benefited from the learning involved in the process. Vice President Harper thanked Patricia King for her role on this, both as a faculty member and a member of SRAC.

Thanking all for their attendance and contributions, Chair Burdi formally closed the meeting at 1:30 pm and invited committee members to let him know of their suggestions for future agenda items.

Minutes taken and respectfully submitted,

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