Minutes for committee meeting of February 16, 2001


Members Absent: Alphonse Burdi, Teshome Wagaw, Nichole Pinkard, Margaret Terpenning, Karen Reiman-Sendi, Sallye Ramsey, Frank Cianciola

Guest: Keith Elki

Meeting called to order at 12:10 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes from January Meeting

Minutes approved unanimously

Update from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs - E. Royster Harper

The Board of Regents approved a motion to explore the issue of a new residence hall. The sight, funding, composition, and other dynamics of the hall have not yet been decided. The general direction has been approved, and intensive collaboration between faculty, staff, and students is anticipated.

The Board of Regents has also approved a motion for work on the renovation of Pierpont Commons. There is an effort to bring some of the general aspects of Central Campus to this location. There is already a career planning center at his location. The Regents approved direction to add a Financial Aid center there as well.

Nine task team reports have been received. They show particularly religious organizations feel as if they are being disenfranchised on this campus.

The Director of Health Services position is open. A search committee has been established to help fill this position. SRAC should think about what role they should play in this process. It is preferred that a physician fill the position.

Session opened to questions for Royster Harper.
Revisions to the Code of Student Conduct - Keith Elkin

Materials Distributed: Articles and Editorials photocopied from The Michigan Daily

Mr. Elkin informed SRAC that the changes to the code have been released, and that President Bollinger approved 85% of SRAC's recommendations. Robert Simpson requested to know which of the recommendations were not supported by the President. Mr. Elkin said that several of them were for legal reasons. President Bollinger sent a letter to Al Burdi, the chair of CLB, and MSA explaining which recommendations were not supported and why. Royster Harper requests that a copy of the letter explaining which recommendations were not supported be distributed to SRAC.

Mr. Elkin expresses his belief that the general feed back from students has been more positive than what is shown in the Daily. Although MSA is not 100% satisfied they do seem to support the direction the process is headed. He also notes that this is not the only chance to amend the Code, it is an evolutionary process. Mr. Elkin suggests he would invite members of The Daily to any training SRAC and the Office of Student Conflict Resolution may undertake so that they can be informed of all pending activity.

Royster Harper notes the importance in this process of the student voice. When the process starts again there is a need to be aggressive about making sure there is proper representation on all levels. Donald Heller says that the student appointees to SRAC are a mechanism to express student opinions that are not in direct line with MSA. Gary Faerber asks what the responsibility and function is of the proposals not accepted, will they come back to SRAC for review again? He also wonders when students are exposed to The Code? Furthermore, if they are not exposed to The Code, how can they be charged with adhering to it.

Mr. Elkin responds that it is included in the orientation process. He also notes that it is on the Office of Student Conflict Resolution web site, and that students can ask questions through that web site. This document should be upfront and students should have to abide by it. Taryn O'Leary asks why this document is so controversial, it seems very fundamental. Mr. Faerber notes that this documents seems somewhat benign and almost intuitive. Do students have to sign this document? Melissa Mercer notes that as a graduate student, she was not exposed to any type of orientation to the University. There is no one place for a graduate student to become acquainted with this document or any University policy.

Robert Simpson says that one comment in The Daily was about why the name needs to be changed. He feels discussion in regards to "The Code" must stop. This document really is a document that supports and delineates the rights of students. It explains what happens to you in certain situations, and more importantly what your options are as a student in certain situations. Ultimately, we are telling students that they do have rights. The name must be changed from "The Code" in order to give the mental view that this is for the students. Melissa Mercer points out that a name for the document such as Rights and Responsibilities (R&R) brings to the student's mind the relevance of this document.
Mr. Elkin points out that other schools do not have as high a standard for their students as does this school. Students here are accorded more rights than almost anywhere else. There are four or five different levels or protection afforded to students before any actual action is taken against them.

Committee Provided with a flow chart and time line of proposed procedure for SRAC's role in The Code amendment process.

Mr. Elkin distributes the aforementioned materials and asks the members if the timeline seems realistic for the committee. Donald Heller feels that the January 31 recommendation may be slightly aggressive, taking into account that SRAC meets only once a month. Could the Office of Student Conflict Resolution and MSA be drawn into this process? If all the deadlines were pushed back one month, what kind of affect would that have on the amendment process? Mr. Elkin points out that this is SRAC's decision to make. The timeline was made in hopes that President Bollinger would be able to review the recommendations made by July. The time of review may be reduced because it is not expected that as many recommendations will be made next year. Members of SRAC expressed that the deadline for review is certainly the most troubling part of the proposed timeline.

Acting Chair Donald Heller recommends that in the absence of many of SRAC's members, that if anyone has specific recommendations regarding the timeline, that they be sent to Mr. Elkin. Mr. Faerber suggests that perhaps it would be helpful to have members of both CLB and MSA come to the committee in order to see how vociferously they will attack this document within the present academic year. Ms. Harper feels there would be value in having MSA come to a future meeting to discuss this matter, because there was somewhat of a disregard for student voice in this process. R. Simpson points out that this is really an issue of institutionalizing amendments. If SRAC makes this an institutionalized process, it would be easier to facilitate student voice. No matter what kind of changes or recommendations are made, this document will not change very much.

Mr. Heller announced that he will recommend to Chair Burdi that discussion on this issue be carried over to the next meeting. There will also be a recommendation to invite members of CLB and MSA to the discussion.

Meeting called to close at 1:30 p.m.