Student Relations Advisory Committee

October 10, 2003
12:00-2:00pm
Bates Room
Michigan Union

Present: Frank Ciacciola, Annette Haines, Susan Hollar, Jesse Knight, Royster Harper, Barbara MacAdam (Chair), Martin Gold, Jens Zorn, Al Burdi, Simone Taylor, Gregg Gunnell, Tiffany Pak

Absent: Jong-Jin Kim, Marilynn Rosenthal, Carl Akerlof

Guests: Kelly Cichy, Janet Weiss

1. Welcome and Introductions

· Chair MacAdam reviewed the previous year's actions that included review and recommendations on amendments to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Amendment proposals are reviewed on a two-year cycle and do not need to be reviewed this year. A discussion of how the process went last year will be on an upcoming agenda.

· November meeting will address LGBT and student welfare issue

2. Approval of Minutes of March 28 and April 26, 2003

Minutes approved unanimously without change.

3. Review and Discussion of Proposed Policy on Faculty-Student Consensual Relationships

Guest: Professor Janet Weiss, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

Note supplementary document (SPG_FacStdt_Relations_7-31.doc)

——Janet Weiss began with a brief introduction as to why the policy is needed. Relationships between students and faculty are valued because they are fundamental to the educational mission of the University. It is important to remember that the relationship is not equal, as faculty members have more authority. Because these relationships may become close, it is possible that they will become romantic. As an institution, we have the obligation to have a policy
to make sure conflicts of interest can be resolved. Some of our peer institutions prohibit these types of relationships between faculty and students, but despite prohibition, they do occur. This proposed policy allows that there are instances where we can permit them to occur as long as we address the conflicts of interest between a faculty member's professional responsibilities and his/her personal relationships.

- Key elements of the Proposed Policy

- If there is a supervisory relationship, (i.e. class, research, employment) and a romantic/sexual relationship occurs, the faculty member must notify the department chair or other academic administrator. The faculty member has the responsibility to avoid the conflict of interest, meaning that he or she might have to remove himself or herself from the supervising the student's work OR the romantic relationship must end.

- A committee member pointed out that the requirement to report a relationship presumably would not be necessary if the faculty member had avoided or immediately eliminated the conflictual element himself/herself.

- Failure to reveal the relationship and take appropriate action will be seen as a violation of the policy and disciplinary action will be taken.

- The policy is currently being shared with other faculty and student groups, providing many constituencies who are interested to have a lot of input in establishing the policy.

- Chair MacAdam opened the floor for comments regarding this policy. Committee members made the following comments:

1. The scope of the policy is possibly too narrow, and disclosure might lead to unnecessary intrusion on privacy, which will not effectively accomplish the goals of the policy.

2. Students need to be informed of the important implications of the policy. The policy will need to go out to schools and colleges explaining why the policy is needed and how it will be carried out. Assistance needs to be provided to deans so they will be equipped with the elements essential to resolve the conflict.

3. Third parties should not be encouraged to tell on the parties involved in the relationship. The policy sounds a little vague

4. What is the definition of a sexual/romantic relationship? Is physical touching a necessary criterion? Perhaps we need a more precise definition.
5. In having a broad and a specific policy that involves sexual harassment, the students should have more a say in the solution process.

6. What are the risks of a faculty member coming forward to the chair? What would encourage faculty members to disclose information regarding a possible sexual/romantic relationship? Confidentiality should be promoted; otherwise it would not promote disclosure. Effort should be made to protect all parties privacy.

3. **Review and Discussion of Draft Sexual Harassment Policy**

Guest: Kelly Cichy, Director, Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC)

Note: Two supplementary documents (Educational Program Plan Pr.doc and SPG_Sexual_Harass_08_27_03.doc)

- Kelly Cichy began by highlighting pieces of the policy in order to open the floor for comments. In summary, the goal is to have contact with all first year students every fall because these students are at the highest level of risk of sexual assault. It is important to note that students are becoming more comfortable on coming out and asking for help in the issues of sexual assault. SAPAC encourages students to be more knowledgable in sexual awareness to allow conversation between students. Peer education is where we will see change.

- Kelly continued with a discussion on the Implementation of the Educational Plan, as follows:
  1. At Summer Orientation, students will be given a basic awareness of resources available to students when they arrive on campus.
  2. Short program/information only will be given at every residential hall’s first hall meeting in early September. This gives students a reminder of the resources available to them.
  3. Intensive small group activities will be held on Sunday, November 2\textsuperscript{nd} in South Quad and Helen Newberry Residences. Here, peer educators will be facilitating discussion, and dinner will be served.
  4. Peer led intensive sexual assault and harassment interactive workshops will be offered to special interest groups who want to come together and addresses specific needs and questions regarding sexual awareness.

- Future plans for SAPAC involve finding out how to reach out to campus through smaller group workshops. There will be intensive training for student educators, who will be returners in residence halls, Greek organizations, and other students who want to be trained to deliver information to their own student groups. SAPAC desires to involve as many campus leaders as possible to get information out in order to change attitudes and behaviors amongst peers.
Chair MacAdam opened the floor for discussion: Does the SRAC want to endorse this educational plan?

1. One concern presented by the committee is the empirical evidence on which this particular design is based. It is important to know that the program will be effective based on systematic research and literature review.

2. The issue of clothing was brought up, which relates to the classroom protocol in the students rights and responsibilities.

3. The Statement of Students of Rights and Responsibilities is closely linked with this policy, and student should know that they are liable and that there are sanctions under the statement if they violate the policy. They should be informed of the serious implications for what happens.

Motion to support the implementation of an educational plan was approved unanimously by the committee. We will forward the suggestions discussed above to Kelly in the near future.

4. Overview of Student Affairs Issues

Royster Harper, Vice President for Student Affairs

Major issues facing the SRAC this year include

1. The sexual awareness and prevention plan [as discussed at this meeting]

2. A Strategic planning process is in process around student learning, life skills, and diversity. The committee will focus on implementing structure towards obtaining these goals and build on what already exists.

3. Greek life: push to reexamine the delaying of Rush, which would involve the possibility of putting together a team to take on this issue. Some questions to consider revolving Greek life include
   - What does it mean to have houses that are not part of the University property?
   - What does it mean to the University when students are in places not affiliation to the institution?
   - Who is to take responsibility for what occurs in these buildings?

4. Residential life initiative: pertaining to students in our residence halls, facilities, financial costs, conditions, etc.

5. The climate on campus: EVERYONE on campus is creating it, and it is our work as a community to establish it. We will begin to have a discussion on climate and its implications for diversity, etc.
There will be more detailed analysis of the major issues listed above at November’s meeting. The critical challenge to SRAC is that we want to develop recommendations in the early stages within the right time frame, so that we can provide meaningful input and can shape the direction on where these issues are headed.

Meeting adjourned at 1:40pm.

Minutes submitted by

Tiffany Pak

SACUA SRAC Intern

1.30.04