Student Relations Advisory Committee

Friday, November 7, 2003
Bates Room - Michigan Union
Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Present: Simone Taylor, Gregg Gunnell, Susan Hollar, Marilynn Rosenthal, Barbara MacAdam (Chair), Martin Gold, Jens Zorn, Jesse Knight, Carl Akerlof, Annette Haines, Royster Harper, Ed Willis, Tiffany Pak

Absent: Al Burdi, Frank Cianciola, Jong-Jin Kim

Guests: Andrew Block, Lyric Chen, Priya Mahajan, Gwyn Hulswit, Keith Elkin, Frederic MacDonald-Dennis

1. Approval of Minutes from 10.10.03 Meeting. Professor Gold suggested two revisions. The motion on the SAPAC proposed educational plan should be revised to read: "Motion to support the implementation of the [concept of] an educational plan was approved unanimously by the committee." An addition should be made to the listed remarks by Associate Provost Janet Weiss -- Professor Gold will forward suggested wording for addition to Tiffany Pak. Summary of their individual remarks will be forwarded to Kelly Cichy and Professor Weiss for their corrections. Approval of 10.10.03 minutes was therefore postponed to the December meeting.

2. Review of 2002-03 Amendment Review Process:

Guests: Andrew Block, former member, Michigan Student Assembly Student Rights Commission, and Lyric Chen and Priya Mahajan, current co-chairs of the Michigan Student Assembly Student Rights Commission (SRC)
Keith Elkin, Director, Office of Student Conflict Resolution, and Gwyn Hulswit, Associate Director, Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR)

- Andrew Block and Lyric Chen presented six points of SRC’s interest regarding the amendment process. The goal of these suggestions is to figure out how we can make the process more effective. The following are the six main ideas presented by SRC:
  1. SRC would like to see the creation of a two-track system for amendments. The fast track would take care of minor details (like typos), which would help to speed up the amendment process.
2. SRC desires a stronger two-way communication between SRC and OSCR. It has been difficult to respond and provide feedback in a timely manner when the information is not made available sooner. Issues should be closed off by the end of the school year without letting the summer slow the process down. One way to alleviate this problem is to have information mailed to the SRC representatives at their home address.

3. The current online website has a feature where students can submit their comments and input to the amendment process. SRC would like to see these comments as they come in, so they can better keep track of the suggestions and implement them accordingly.

4. SRC noted that it is not possible for every member of the SRAC committee to attend all meetings, and would like to make sure that the full range of viewpoints are represented in the SRAC’s decisions.

   · Chair MacAdam noted that every member of SRAC was contacted directly for their final views on each amendment. All minority viewpoints were included verbatim in the recommendation document that was forwarded to the President for the final decision.

5. Timeline issue: SRC would like to get recommendations completed before the end of the semester, and would prefer to have a set timeline for MSA in the Fall term. This action would make communication much easier, and help our recommendations get completed in the academic year.

   · November 1st is the proposed deadline, and it would be a good deadline to strive for if we want to see the process completed in one academic year (September to April time frame).

   · We possibly need more outside of this monthly meeting time to keep up with the timeline. This will give the President the months of December, January, and February to complete the process. This is important because we want to see suggestions go back to the same student core.

   · SRC Meetings are Wednesdays from 4-5:30pm. MSA should be in touch with what is discussed in the SRC and SRAC meetings. This entails more communication between student representatives.

6. SRC would like to create a new body of students who specifically deal with amendment process. Preparing the amendment package. This body will be headed by a chair appointed for one year (during the year of the amendment cycle). SRC will discuss this proposal in upcoming weeks, and if passed, it would be effective next September.
• On the December meeting agenda, SRAC will discuss issues on the six points presented by the SRC.

3. Review and Discussion of the Gender Identity Work Group Final Report: Update on Provost’s Task Force on LGBT Climate

   Guest: **Frederic MacDonald-Dennis**, Director of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs (document attached: "Final Report of the Gender Identity Work Group")

Frederic MacDonald-Dennis highlighted the main components of the document. He provided background information on transgender issues, particularly the need for gender identity to become a protected class in the University’s non-discrimination policy.

The report is the result of an assessment of the needs of transgendered individuals, and the implications for the division of student affairs. Vice President Harper charged a gender identity working group to evaluate the gaps that currently exist and what can be done to close the gap. The task force, consisting of students, faculty, staff, and community members, met approximately twenty times, and the outcome of their work was a student survey on transgender issues, along with a self assessment of what the division of student affairs can do.

The document has been a collaborative effort, with recommendations made in eleven different areas. Transgendered students need a safe place to use the bathroom. Student Affairs should advocate for unisex bathrooms which people of any gender can use, and develop a list of a unisex restrooms available to students. The University Health Service should modify forms to be more inclusive and sensitive to gender identity. Consultation with outside physicians, to assist with the needs of transgendered individuals should be available. DPS has been training staff also, especially in terms of safety for students. CPP has also modified forms to include gender identities.

**Student Affairs issues**

Committee members discussed the implication of housing policy and how current policy impacts transgendered students and others living in the community. For example; the current housing policy asks students to identify themselves as male or female, for purposes of assigning housing. The definition of gender is based on one’s birth certificate, however the birth certificate may present challenges (i.e. when a person has an operation done, but did not get his or her birth certificate changed).

Vice President Harper will present key questions for the committee at December’s meeting. Please contact Frederic MacDonald-Dennis (fdennis@umich.edu) if you have any input for him on this document.
Dean Ed Willis from the Provost’s Task Force provided an update on the group’s current focus, which is the bylaw issue. The preliminary recommendation to Vice President Harper and the Provost will be made by the end of Fall term. There have been two town hall sessions to get feedback from the campus on these issues, along with a campus website to address LGBT concerns. The task force has met approximately every three weeks, beginning in April 2003.

- Questions raised by the committee:
  1. What is the situation on transgender issues at our sister institutions?

- Data has been looked at from other schools, such as Iowa and Brown University, but no comparisons have been made.

  2. In regards to the bylaw changes, could transgender issues be included as an aspect of sexual orientation?

- The current notion is that the definition of sexual orientation does not include gender identity.

Chair MacAdam proposed that the next meeting be extended by a half hour (next meeting 12.10.03) Topics for that meeting include:

- Greek life strategic plan
- More on the amendment process
- And possibly review of the NCAA Recertification Self-Study recommendations on Student-Athlete welfare issues.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm.

Minutes submitted by

Tiffany Pak

Student Intern