Student Relations Advisory Committee

November 19, 1999

Attendance


I. Opening Remarks

Professor Burdi opened the business part of the meeting (as scheduled) at noon with a welcome to the group. He indicated the committee had a full agenda and proposed some time guidelines to get the work of the day completed.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 15, 1999 meeting were distributed for committee review and acceptance. Given the time available, Professor Burdi invited the committee to review the minutes more thoroughly after the meeting, and then contact either him or Grace Wu for any suggestions for revisions. He did note that should no revisions be suggested, the minutes as distributed at the meeting will be taken as approved.

III. Updates from Committee Chair

Professor Burdi reported that he and several SRAC colleagues (Gold, Wagaw) met informally on November 12, 1999 with our SRAC student members to discuss committee charges and scope of business. The necessity of a faculty-student dialogue and participation in SRAC was re-affirmed as a most desirable function. There was a definite feeling that the time spent in this informal meeting was time well spent.

IV. Matters Arising from Committee

Julia Klein raised an issue for future consideration dealing with university strategies and programs in the areas of mental health education and wellness for students. It was her perception that students often appear not to have a convenient place to turn to when concerns of their mental health arise.

David Lu raised an issue for future consideration dealing with the levels of awareness students have on university financial aid and scholarship programs.
V. Matters Arising from Interim Vice-President Royster Harper

Royster Harper enthusiastically shared with committee the Regental approval (November, 1999) to name an existing university center as the Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning at the University of Michigan. The programmatic focus of the newly-named center is to sustain and enhance the engagement of Michigan students in learning through community service, enable faculty to integrate service into academic courses and conduct community-based research, and develop partnerships with communities to improve the quality of life for all students. A copy of the Regents Communication on the matter was shared with committee.

Royster Harper then shared with the committee a planning document "Task Teams: Primary Divisional and Institutional Issue Related to Student Life--- 1999-2000". She briefly commented on a number of important and timely issues in that document, including alcohol and other drugs, summer housing programs safety and security, north campus/Pierpont Commons renovation, international graduate students and their families, religious/spiritual needs of students, student staff training for building community, transforming communities, research coordination and eating disorders. These items have evolved from a number of productive interactions between students, their and academic advisors, and university leadership. Royster welcomed ideas and suggestions from SRAC on this matter. The committee thanked Royster for her leadership, and responsive planning in addressing these issues that have the potential to affect - in reality and perception - student life on campus.

VII. Focus Discussions/Actions Items

Given the importance of the two "focus items" for the meeting and the need to give proper committee time to each, Professor Burdi moved to re-arrange (with committee approval) the meeting's agenda sequence so as to introduce the "Life Sciences Initiative" prior to a more in-depth and much-needed discussion of the "Code" amendment process.

- "Life Sciences Initiative". Frank Cianciola provided SRAC with an executive summary of the "Life Sciences Institute" proposal which was presented to and approved by the Regents in July, 1999. After a brief "walk through" of the document, he encouraged SRAC members to look over the documents more thoroughly in preparation for a more focused and extensive discussion of the "Life Sciences Institute" which might hopefully take place at our January, 2000 meeting. Burdi invited Cianciola and Royster to identify and invite key people in the "Life Sciences Institute" planning to meet with SRAC at its next meeting.

Professor Gold concluded the discussion on this matter with the important perspective that the "Life Sciences Institute" is only one part, important at that, of the conceptually much-broader "Life Sciences Initiative" envisioned for the campus.

- "Code" Amendment Procedures. The committee spent much of the meeting with a first discussion of how it wishes to effectively fulfill its newly assigned responsibility of
reviewing and advising the President (through the Vice President for Student Affairs) on proposed amendments (i.e., from MSA, SACUA, University) to the current iteration of the "Code".

In setting the tone for the discussion, Burdi emphasized that the issue of whether or not a Code is needed is not the purview of SRAC. Thus, the focus for the committee is on the "Code" amendment process. Moving into a discussion of the amendment process, Burdi asked each SRAC member to identify what each thought to be the desirable characteristics of such a SRAC amendment process. Going around the table, member by member, such characteristics identified/suggested included timeliness, fairness, clarity, defenseability, openness, and collegiality/civility among all parties involved.

Addressing several ideas on how SRAC might effectively and responsibly carry out its duties on the "Code" amendment process, Burdi circulated a very preliminary draft of his which essentially was a hybrid of a detailed amendment proposal (by Simone Taylor, October 15th) and a more flexible procedural proposal articulated by Professor Gold. The essential elements of the Burdi hybrid proposal included the essential elements of an open period for amendment proposal submissions, a deadline for submissions, a SRAC batch-review and recommendation period, a deadline for delivery of SRAC recommendations to the President (through VPSA). Recognizing the SRAC did not have control over recommendations passed on to the president, the committee did recognize the desirability of final decisions (by the president) being made and announced prior to the official ending of classes after the winter term.

In response to Professor Simpson's questioning of the "batch" processing of amendments, Burdi explained that the rationale for this "batch" approach is that a comprehensive set of recommendations could be sent to the president at one time for his action. A case in point would be the possibility of a SRAC recommendation bringing together essential items embodied in one or several amendment proposals independently derived and submitted by different groups. If SRAC eventually moved to a "batch" approach, this would not preclude some preliminary SRAC review of proposals (possibly by SRAC subcommittees) as the proposals were delivered to SRAC. For example, there may be proposals which essentially call for wording and format changes, and these could be handled as they arrive. Professor Gold and several others even saw a SRAC recommendation on one or several Code" amendment proposals being deferred with an explanation and appropriate notification of the group(s) submitting those proposals. In concluding the discussion on this matter, Burdi opined that in that SRAC is charting (however responsibly) a "Code" amendment process for the very first time, it is not inconceivable that the process used in after the first year of work will be exactly the same as that first mapped out. There was committee consensus that details of a batch "Code" amendment process be drafted, i.e., at January, 2000 meeting.

VIII. Adjournment
The meeting formally closed at 1:35 PM, with a reminder that there will not be a SRAC meeting in December due to final examinations and holiday travel plans. The next meeting will be on Friday, January 21, 2000.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Grace Wu

GLW