Student Relations Advisory Committee

Friday, December 12, 2003

Bates Room – Michigan Union

12:00-1:30pm

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

Absent: Susan Hollar, Jong-Jin Kim

Guest: Keith Elkin

1. Approval of Minutes from 11.7.03 Meeting

Approval of the October meeting minutes has been delayed to January

November minutes approved

2. Review and Discussion of the Final Report of the Greek Strategic Planning Group

Input on Greek Life Strategic Plan

- The report should retain its positive, active tone but should also include a more direct recognition of the problems and challenges the plan was designed to address. The plan might address more specifically what needs to change, and address why the Greek community has a poor reputation (deserved or undeserved). We recognize that the "Strategic Plan" that was before us was in essence a "blueprint" upon which more specifics can and would be added as the leadership in the Greek community continues to work on this plan.

- Serious bodily injury occurred to a fraternity pledge this year. This kind of event is extremely serious and cannot be overlooked.
- An important question not addressed in the plan is: to what degree have efforts over the last ten years been successful in trying to modify questionable behavior within, or associated with, the Greek system, e.g., alcohol abuse, sexual harassment, etc. A rigorous process of data collection, analysis, and reporting would be an important step in evaluating these efforts and document progress in an ongoing way.

- Maintaining and strengthening connections between the University and the Greek system--including working more directly with the national leadership where the University may have the greatest impact--are critical components in exerting meaningful influence since the University has little formal authority over Greek life.

- A live-in advisor and stronger mentor/faculty ties should be encouraged. Although the University has no formal control over the Greek organizations, it might be in a position to induce the creation of insurance plans where by fraternities could get a significant discount on their liability insurance IF they have a live-in, mature adult supervisor [housemother-equivalent] to minimize the extremes of behavior.

- The current pattern of students rushing in the fall term of their first year is questionable. In asking students to make major decisions just as they arrive on campus, this pattern works against the establishment of university-initiated living-learning communities. It is important to emphasize that the issue of early rush is of primary concern to many on this campus, and should not be over looked.

- The costs of the University program should be reviewed, with recognition that in these tight budget times, the University community might not perceive this as a priority for additional resources. Monies from OSA to the Greek community may be better used for other needs the serve the general student community. Although the current funding provided to the Greek community is not a huge financial outlay.

- Participation in the Greek system is based in many cases on exclusionary, selective membership, and participation fees can be high--serving as an additional barrier to individual students. This is perceived by many to be contrary to the goals of a public university with a commitment to diversity.

- Ultimately, students are responsible for their individual behavior, and it should be noted that the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities applies to all University students, including those living in Greek-affiliated residences.
3. 2002/03 SSRR Amendment Process Improvement

Specifics of student right commission

1. The fast track is a good way to go. It is suggested that MSA be invited to work with the committee.

   2. A joint set of recommendations could be developed.

   3. Involvement of SRAC membership – how would we capture initial thoughts, track it, and solicit final decision?

   4. Other possible sources for proposed amendment changes

   5. Allow MSA to make the recommendation. The bi-annual process alleviates the amount of work that has to be done.

4. Gender Identity Work Group Recommendations

   · Concerns of the transgender community should be considered separately from concerns over sexual orientation

   · Have a representative of the Gender Identity Work group give the SRAC more information of what is going on, so we will know where it currently stands.

   · Offer a statement of commendation (not endorsing a particular amendment) to the work group

   · Chair MacAdam proposes a draft of a statement of commendation for the Gender Identity Group, and receives approval for motion.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm

Minutes submitted by

Tiffany Pak

SACUA SRAC Intern