

COMMISSION ON STUDENT AFFAIRS

February 17, 2011

**Present:** Bekah Ulmer for Sara Brickman, Sue Buyrn, Tyler Campbell, Michael Cardman, Rick Ferraro, Monika Gibson, Caroline Gimenez, Bo Hart, Lauren Heming, designee for Stacey Pannell, Monica Hunter, Rawlins Jefferson, designee for Pamela Palmer, Emily Wilkinson for Greer Kelly, Frances Kong, designee for Richmond Hwang, Nathan Lavinka, Shane McCarty, Shree Narayanan for Michelle McLeese, Jonathan Moore, Matt Parker, David Ramras, Katelyn Sugar-Schmidt, designee for Kim Carlson, Frank Shushok, Guy Sims, Ed Spencer, Courtney Gleason for Leighton Vila, Alex Walker

**Absent:** Paris Hamada, Sandy Bass, Deepu George, Frank Hernandez, Eric Hodges, Brad Klein, Mary Ann Lewis, Anna LoMascolo, Joseph Seaton, Robert Sebek, Shyrah Thomas, Joe Tran

**Guests:** Kevin Ayoub, Heather Evans, Diana Miller, Elian Java hen, Frances Kong, Jason Threat

**I. Call to Order**

Nathan Lavinka, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:33 P.M.

**II. Adoption of Agenda**

Motion was made to adopt agenda. The motion was seconded and the agenda was approved.

**III. Welcome and Chair Update (s)**

No Report

**IV. Guest Speakers/Presenters**

A. Diana Miller, Student Legal Services, *Legal Rights of Students and Student Organizations*

Ms. Miller explained to the Commission that the services provided by Student Legal Services are free and that it is not an agency of Virginia Tech. Services are provided by an independent contractor paid by the Student Government Association. They provide legal advice and consultation on various matters that serve students as individuals as well as service to student organizations. Services covered range from criminal, traffic, civil, domestic, immigration, and business. Student Legal Services does not provide advice on matters of student vs. student, student vs. university, or student vs. parent. Ms. Miller also provides referrals for areas that she does not have expertise.

The issue raised that brought Ms. Miller to the Commission is a concern about University insurance and how it relates to various organizations. Ms. Miller explained

that the insurance policy that the university has covers the university, staff, faculty, or any agent contracted to the university. University Student Life Programs, such as the Honor System, are also covered. Chartered Student Organizations and Registered Student Organizations are not covered.

Mr. Ayoub noted that Event Planning has a guideline that details insurance and liability. Any large event, contracted performer, minors involved, high risk activity, any event with alcohol, etc., should have a certificate of insurance and when an organization gets a certificate of insurance, they ask that they have VPI & SU and the Commonwealth of Virginia included in that policy.

Ms. Hunter noted that most organizations carry a blanket insurance policy and from a budget standpoint, most of the CSA organizations are covered.

## **V. Old Business**

- A. David Ramras, Student Budget Board Co-Chair, *Resolution for Constitution revisions/amendments, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading*

Mr. Ramras presented the second reading of the Student Budget Board Constitution for revision. He cited the changes that were made in Article II, Section A and C. A motion was made to approved the changes, the motion was seconded and the carried for approval.

- B. Susan Buyrn, Panhellenic President, *Resolution for Constitution revisions/amendments, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading*

Ms. Buyrn presented the second reading of the Panhellenic Council Constitution siting correction of some grammatical errors and sentence structure. Following her presentation a motion was made to approve the changes to the constitution, the motion was seconded and carried for approval.

## **VI. New Business**

- A. Monika Gibson, Director of Graduate School Student Services, Kevin Ayoub, Event Planning, *Updates to University Policy No. 5000, University Facilities Usage and Event Approval, 2.7 General Rules for Events and Use of University*

Ms. Gibson raised a concern about Policy 5000 – General Rules for Events and Use of University Facilities, which states that “No activities may be scheduled 48 hours before or during scheduled exams.” The concern is that this that this policy is unnecessary and prohibitive for graduate students because they do not necessarily have exams at that time, so they do not need this type of protection and they have a need to hold events during that time of the year. They are seeking exception to this policy that the

GLC/Graduate Student Organizations be exempted. The other element is that this policy is upheld only by event planning, i.e., Recreational Sports has specific events during exam time and Dr. Sims noted that events are held in the Break Zone. It was clarified that the “48 hours” includes the last day of class and reading day. It was also noted that the irony of this policy is that it pushes people out of reservable space, but it does not keep the events from occurring in other areas.

Dr. Spencer explained that this is an administrative policy, not a governance policy, which comes under Sherwood Wilson’s area. The Commission could pass a motion requesting that that portion of the policy be deleted and it would go from this Commission to Dr. Wilson. In response to a question, Dr. Spencer indicated that he would be in support of the deletion of this policy. Mr. Ayoub stated that we would have to note that major entertainment programs would not be appropriate and Ms. Hunter noted that we would be expected to exercise good judgment as to what types of events would be approved.

A motion was made to recommend to Dr. Wilson that they strike item #6 (No activities may be scheduled 48 hours before or during scheduled exams.), in Policy 5000. The motion was seconded and carried. Mr. Lavinka will be in contact with Dr. Wilson.

B. Frank Shushok, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Heather Evans, Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, *Policy Memorandum Number 95* (First Reading)

Ms. Evans presented the group with a brief overview of the Fraternity and Sorority structure noting that there are about 3,500 students who are members of 56 fraternities and sororities. These 56 chapters fall under four umbrellas: the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, National Panhellenic Council, and the Multicultural Greek Council. Ms. Evans then presented the first reading regarding Policy Memorandum Number 95 stating that first semester freshmen could go through the recruitment process, but cannot be initiated and join the group until a GPA is established in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. This policy also does not include two of the councils who have recently joined. The proposal is to give the councils the latitude to decide when the recruitment period would begin. First semester freshmen would then be able to go through the entire process (recruitment, new member education, and initiation) in the 10-week period recommended by national organizations. In response to a question, it was noted that each council must have an academic requirement and each chapter has a minimum GPA requirement for initiation.

Dr. Spencer noted that the real dilemma is that the University policy places IFC at odds with some of their national requirements. According to Nationals, once you pledge you must initiate within 6 – 10 weeks. Dr. Shushok noted that the current policy extends the amount of time you have two categories of people, initiated and non-initiated and that Nationals does not like a long period of time of power differential.

Dr. Spencer also noted that fraternities and sororities are registered student organizations and questioned whether the university should really restrict who joins a student organization because of what their GPA is; this could impact other organizations. An alternative approach would be to ask to delete the policy and then it would be up to the national and local organizations to make their own policy.

Mr. Lavinka noted that the second reading and vote will occur at the next meeting.

C. Michael Cardman, Chief Justice Undergraduate Honor System, *Change to UG Honor System Constitution*

Michael Cardman made a presentation on some changes to the Undergraduate Honor System Constitution in the hopes of getting a vote of endorsement from the Commission. The reason for changes is that they want to realign what they consider the consequences of sanctions in proportion to the academic offenses that occur and they want to take out the University service hours because they really do not have an impact. He also noted that their timeline is to have the constitutional changes go before the June BOV meeting.

Mr. Lavinka asked Mr. Cardman if he could e-mail a copy of the constitution to the Commission so that they can review it and table the vote until the March 3 meeting. A suggestion was made that after the constitution is e-mailed to the Commission members that they also be allowed to vote on the endorsement by e-mail. It was clarified that this vote would be for the Commission to write a letter of support, not a vote on the constitutional changes.

**VII. Announcements**

- Ms. Hunter announced that Advance Reservation submissions are due on February 28.
- Ms. Hunter announced that the University Student Leadership Awards application deadline has been extended to February 28.
- Dr. Sims invited everyone to visit the Breakzone where there is a new area called the End Zone that groups can use, right beyond the pool tables.
- 

**VIII. Adjournment – 4:50 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda Rogers, Secretary