



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of February 20, 2020
87 Blackinton Street**

Members in Attendance:

Frederick Keator, Chair
Mohan Boodram (telephonic)
Denise Marshall, Board Chair
Jacob Vitali, Student Trustee

Others in Attendance

James F. Birge, President
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs
Lisa Lescarbeau, Board Clerk
Brian Rhodes, Beacon News

Chair Keator called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

Sexual Violence Prevention Program

VP Holbrook provided an overview of the plans for a campus symposium to address concerns of sexual violence. On April 9, a Movement to End Campus Sexual Violence Program has been scheduled. A copy of a list of confirmed sessions was reviewed. The day's timetable is still being developed with a full day of speakers and presentations planned. Student involvement will be key to this event.

In addition to the speaking sessions, information tabling will occur throughout the day in the campus center. Beacon news will be an important part of the communication plans. Faculty will be encouraged to allow students to attend and to find ways to make attendance work with class schedules.

Ongoing efforts related to sexual violence prevention and awareness include a 10 session series conducted by Nicole Comstock in fall 2020. Further work is planned on educational programs and providing a process for feedback on the programs throughout the year.

A social media campaign will be conducted for the April 9 event, and will include Marketing and Communications staff working with Student Affairs staff, as well as students on the event committee. In addition, the President's Office will work with an intern on content to include in an existing student podcast series.

In response to questions regarding the current online training using Canvas VP Holbrook acknowledged the concern with the ease of taking the training and noted that many pieces of the training are mandated by the EO policy. The current program was different this year and was driven by student feedback. As well, Nicole Comstock is part of a committee hearing feedback from students on this item.

Campus Safety

Student Trustee Vitali provided a review of the campus safety walk in November, which he participated in along with other members of SGA and the campus community. This is an annual walk that is conducted with Campus Police to test existing equipment, determine areas of concern, measure light, and evaluate accessibility. Areas of concern were identified with lighting being of most concern. Students have expressed a desire for more LED lighting similar to what exists in the campus quad to outward facing areas of campus, in particular, where campus and the North Adams community connect.

Money from the supplemental grant, which has been approved but not dispersed, will address some of the campus safety issues including upgrading blue light technology, adding four blue lights, adding 360 degree cameras on top of blue lights, purchasing a police cruiser, addressing snow and ice removal with the purchase of a vehicle to be more effective in this area, and improving campus lighting.

President Birge stated that in addition to the supplemental budget funds, additional money will be available from the state and will be used to improve exterior door locking mechanisms.

The supplemental budget also included campus IT and Safety upgrades for public higher ed. It has not been determined yet how these funds will be disseminated among campuses, however, should it be received, it will be used to address items related to lighting, to upgrade IT monitoring abilities, and servers to accommodate the newer technology that is part of the blue light upgrade plans.

Student Trustee Vitali discussed further concern with safety related to walkability of campus. He relayed his recent experience with encountering ice on untreated campus walkways at 1:30 a.m. The committee discussed options for passing through buildings in contrast to walking outside in the late night and early morning hours. Concerns exist with buildings remaining unlocked after

hours as access would not be limited to campus community members; anyone walking in the area would be able to enter buildings leading to other safety concerns.

Campus accessibility was discussed relative to pedestrian traffic. The lack of a crosswalk on Montana Street and the ability to safely cross Church Street in front of Berkshire towers were specifically highlighted. Crosswalks on city streets fall under the jurisdiction of the City of North Adams. Representatives of MCLA meet with city officials and request improvements. An update will be sought from the city on these items.

Further conversations will be had amongst Student Affairs, Facilities, Campus Police, and SGA to address specific concerns raised. Facilities will be requested to pay more attention to icy conditions during the overnight shifts and a possible student safety escort service will be explored.

VP Holbrook reminded members of the Guardian app available on mobile devices that allow all users to notify public safety when they are leaving one location and what time they expect to arrive at their destination.

Additional methods of communicating and educating on the use of the Guardian app and on campus safety were discussed. A table educating on the Guardian app will be set up during the April 9 sexual violence prevention symposium. It was also suggested that posters regarding the Guardian app be placed around campus.

Further concerns regarding campus accessibility in particular ramps, the townhouse laundry area and greenhouse, and the materials used in the pathways of the townhouses were presented.

Performance Measures

VP Holbrook provided a copy of the Kick-off to College Program presentation. She reviewed DHE performance measures related to first year retention, the kick-off to college initiative, and key components of the initiative.

She provided an overview of the redesigned orientation program which is a result of evaluating student needs as they exit high school and the collection of student data at the time of application and enrollment.

Committee members discussed methods of communicating with students and opportunities to use video content during onboarding and orientation. Design of videos is in process.

In response to a question regarding the retention statistic that 50% of men of color did not return after their first year, Chair Marshall noted that this was a one-time occurrence observed from fall 2018 to fall 2019, and is not expected to trend.

VP Holbrook next reviewed the redesigned overnight orientation program including the establishment of freshmen academies to develop cohorts. She also provided definitions of learning communities and cohort, noting the differences and how the two intersect.

The planned “First 8 Weeks” programs for first-time, fulltime students was reviewed.

VP Holbrook provided an update on the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) conducted during the prior AY. Commitments made to address key areas resulting from the SSI were reviewed.

Dining changes have been well received as observed through preliminary data and dining survey results. Guardian and SchoolDude use have been implemented for student use to address SSI results related to residential life and facilities. Senior administration began holding open office hour sessions to increase access and availability for more casual interactions. These sessions will be refined in the spring semester in response to student feedback.

Campus center, leisure space and activities items will continue to be addressed through the renovations currently underway in the campus center. Innovative and student run programming discussions continue with support for these programs available through SGA funding.

Concerns expressed relative to the judicial process will be addressed through a CAS program review of the student conduct program. The expansion of the student handbook and the launch of new case management software for conduct are intended to improve communications and processes.

Lastly, VP Holbrook asked that Trustees email her with topics they would like to hear more about at future Student Affairs Committee meetings.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 a.m.