

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2009

[In these minutes: Parent-Student-College Relations, 2008 Welcome Week Evaluation and Proposed Changes for Welcome Week 2009]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view of, nor are they binding on the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Eric Brown, chair pro tem, Thomas Bilder, Kendre Turonie, Christiane Bartels, Catherine Solheim, Curt Baker, Silvia Canelon, Hilary Plockelmann

REGRETS: Jeffrey Wencl, chair, Jennifer Engler, Thomas Reynolds, Claire Wolters

ABSENT: Nathan Pelzer, Amelious Whyte, Andy Howe, Kim Roufs, Megan Hayes, Maureen Kunkler, Caroline Younts, Olga Zakharenko

OTHERS ATTENDING: Frank Blalark, Gabriele Schmiegel

GUESTS: James Liberman, Orientation & First Year Programs; Jenny Porter, Orientation & First Year Programs; Marjorie Savage, Office for Student Affairs

I). Eric Brown, chair pro tem, called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present.

II). Mr. Brown introduced the first agenda item, a presentation by Marjorie Savage, Office for Student Affairs, on parent-student-college relations. Ms. Savage began by noting that the University established its Parent Program (<http://www.parent.umn.edu/about.html>) approximately 15 years ago, and that this program is seen as one of the leading parent programs in the country. The Parent Program provides communication between the University and parents of University students in order to promote student success, advance an appropriate role for parents within the University community, and create goodwill for the University.

Examples of what the University does to keep parents informed about what is happening on campus includes, but is not limited to:

- *University Parent* newsletter
- E-mail updates
- Events for parents, e.g., move-in day reception, Parents Weekend.
- A comprehensive website for parents that answers a lot of parent's frequently asked questions.

Ms. Savage noted that the Parent Program conducts a survey every 2 years to learn about parent demographic information, the issues parents are concerned about, whether parents take advantage of the information that the University provides, etc. The Parent Program has grown in response to these surveys. Survey data has verified that parents' concerns change during the course of the 4 years their children are attending the University.

Currently, the University does not do a lot of fund solicitation from parents, but may consider this at some point in the future. Other schools are doing this and they have had a significant amount of success. Generally, funds are solicited for things that directly impact students, e.g. remodeling of a student lounge.

Since the Parent Program was established, the University is seeing a difference in how parents are relating to the University and their student's experience (Baby Boomer parents versus Generation X parents).

In closing, Ms. Savage asked if members had questions or thoughts on how the University should work with parents. Members' questions and comments included:

- Of the parents that receive e-mail updates, what is the breakdown between parents of 1st year students, 2nd year students, etc.? Ms. Savage stated that the break-out is pretty even, and parents tend to stay on the e-mail list for the entire time their child is attending the University. The print newsletter is sent to the parents of full-time, undergraduate students.
- Does the Parent Program collaborate with other offices at the University around retention of students, particularly for students of color? Ms. Savage stated that the Parent Program has reached out to the cultural offices on campus. Many of these offices work one-on-one with students and often do not have the time to reach out to parents. In looking at the University's students of color population this year, it was noticed that a disproportionate number of these students commute. Parents of commuter students frequently do not know about the Parent Program; therefore, the Parent Program is thinking about ways to communicate through students to their families.
- Does the Parent Program do any outreach to parents of first generation students? The Parent Program, noted Ms. Savage, has not specifically targeted this group. Parents that have identified themselves as parents of first generation students generally have questions that are different from other parents.
- Does the Parent Program take calls from parents about having access to their child's records? Most parents find FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) to be an annoyance. Parent Program staff explain to parents that FERPA is not a University policy, but rather it is a federal data privacy policy.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Brown thanked Ms. Savage for her presentation.

III). Next, Mr. Brown welcomed Jenny Porter and James Liberman from Orientation and 1st Year Programs. He noted that Ms. Porter and Mr. Liberman were invited to share 2008 Welcome Week survey results

(<http://www.ofyp.umn.edu/topnavpgs/facstaff/surveyresults/index.html>) and provide

information about the fall 2009 Welcome Week schedule. Copies of their PowerPoint presentation were distributed to members. To begin, Ms. Porter walked members through the timeline and details of the First Year Assessment Plan for 2008.

Ms. Porter went on to share Class of 2011 significant findings:

- 178 students left by January 2008.
- 34% of these students were from out-of-state.
- 28% had a GPA of 3.1 or higher.
- 36% had a GPA of 1.0 or lower.
- New students left the University for a variety of reasons, e.g., financial, academic, medical.
- 70% of students who left the University during their first year had parents who did not attend parent orientation, and 22% attended the late orientation in August.
- 51% of students who left enrolled at another institution in the spring of 2008.

Mr. Liberman then shared Welcome Week data for the class of 2012 and highlighted the following:

- The Class of 2012 totaled 5106.
- 97.3% of the Class of 2012 was expected to participate in Welcome Week. Of these participants, 82% lived in the residence halls and 18% were commuters.
- There were 336 Welcome Week leaders. Leaders volunteered over 100 hours of service to the University to support the program.
- 3,911 or 93% of residential students attended their first small group meeting and 674 or 75% of commuter students attended their first small group meeting.
- 73% of students attended all six small group meetings.
- Students primary concerns prior to Welcome Week were:
 - Academic coursework.
 - Making friends and meeting people.
 - Financial concerns.
 - Developing skills.
 - Deciding on a major.
- 1,975 Welcome Week students completed the post Welcome Week survey. Survey results indicated that:
 - 58% of these students had a greater sense of community.
 - 55% felt more prepared to transition to the University.
 - 55% felt that Welcome Week helped them acknowledge their individual responsibility to the campus community and to creating their college experience.
 - 54% had a greater sense of institutional pride.

Moving on, Ms. Porter shared an abbreviated day-by-day 2008 Welcome Week schedule of events. Members' attention was turned to the PowerPoint presentation where these events were highlighted.

Next, Mr. Liberman provided information about Kick It! Kick It! is the on-line engagement program that gives students an opportunity to learn about campus resources.

By visiting Web sites, campus offices, and attending events, students are entered into a raffle to win prizes each week of the Kick It! program. Mostly recently, more than 4,000 tickets were completed by 475 freshman students. More information about Kick It! can be found at <http://www.ofyp.umn.edu/fystudents/kickit/>.

Ms. Porter noted that student concerns about 2008 Welcome Week included:

- Needing more time to settle into residence halls.
- Preferring more interactive College Day activities.
- Experiencing problems with check-in and students receiving Welcome Week packets prior to convocation.
- Preferring more scheduled free time.

Changes for Welcome Week 2009 will include:

- Giving students more time to check into the residence halls.
- Arranging more intentional first meetings to set the tone and outline expectations.
- Offering more structured free time throughout the schedule.
- Moving convocation to Thursday and couple it with College Day.
- Scheduling community engagement activities on Saturday and Sunday to accommodate more options for community involvement.

Ms. Porter noted that the data collected from Welcome Week 2008 was used to guide planning for 2009 and beyond.

Lastly, Ms. Porter turned members' attention to the Welcome Week 2009 tentative schedule, and she and Mr. Liberman highlighted aspects of the schedule. Ms. Porter encouraged members to review the schedule in more detail at their leisure.

Mr. Brown thanked Ms. Porter and Mr. Liberman for their presentation.

IV). Hearing no further business, Mr. Brown adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate

