

MINUTES – SAAA Committee Meeting

Thursday, April, 2018

Hillman 272

1. WELCOME

Harvey Borovetz called the meeting to order at ~3:00 PM. Several members (Joanne Baird, Susan Skledar, Patricia Connel, Frayda Cohen) informed Dr. Taboas that they were unable to attend.

2. GRADUATE STUDENT UNIONIZATION

Harvey Borovetz mentioned that he had heard several news reports about graduate student unionization at Penn State; and Robin Kear quoted a news article indicating that voting on this questions was ongoing at Penn State at 3-locations: main campus, Hershey and Harrisburg. Both eligible RA and TA students were voting (~3,800 Penn State students overall). According to Dr. David Gau, here at Pitt signature gathering continues among the more than 8,000 graduate students campus wide. While the major graduate student concerns noted by Dr. Gau at prior meetings remain, Dr. Gau noted the efforts of Dr. Urban to enhance communication among all graduate students campus wide; the availability of more career development programs campus wide. These are considered as positive efforts to address graduate student concerns. It was also noted by Dr. Harding that Dr. Urban is holding a meeting on May 10 among directors of graduate programs campus wide. At the meeting collective data will be shared along with surveys of best graduate student practices. Dr. Taboas is planning to include the May 10 meeting on the agenda for the next SAAA Meeting.

3. RECRUITMENT UPDATES

Dr. Harding provided an update on undergraduate (UG) recruitment. As of April 19 the University had receive 3,000 deposits for fall, 2018; which is 2% above the number for fall, 2017. Dr. Harding expects to reach his goal of 4,050 deposits by the “magic date” of May 1. Dr. Harding stated that the new students will be the most talented and diverse class. 42%-43% will be non-resident compared to 38%-39% in 2017. In fact, Dr. Harding has hired a recruitment coordinator for California alone. The Committee discussed the impact of privatization on recruitment, and Dr. Harding indicated that it would have a significant impact, which he would need to address.

4. MENTAL HEALTH

Harvey Borovetz mentioned that he had recently read an article regarding suicides among graduate students. This led to a discussion of student health services on campus. It was noted that he need for mental health services continues to increase and discussions within several units indicated that it can be better. There is agreement that resource allocation is very important for student health services to meet its mission. There is a campus crisis hot line and same-day center service walk-in crisis availability.

Pitt Police can be involved if it is concluded that a student could seriously harm himself/herself (wellness check). To be kept in mind is that all Pitt Police are college graduates, which means that the Pitt Police are familiar with college life etc. Mental health services for undergraduate versus graduate students is an agenda topic to be considered for future SAAA Committee meetings.

5. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

With Title IX training and the recent reports about the Communication Department fresh in everyone's mind, the question was asked about sexual harassment among graduate students. According to Dr. Gau, among the several hundred graduate students who respond to annual graduate student surveys, 5 – 10 report incidences of sexual harassment. It was agreed that the topic of sexual harassment among graduate students is a worthwhile agenda items for future SAAA meetings.

6. ELECTIONS

Dr. Taboas led this discussion, in which other SAAA members were encouraged to serve as co-chair. If no one indicates a willingness to do so, Dr. Taboas and Harvey Borovetz would continue as co-chairs.

7. FUTURE MEETING TIMES/DATES

Dr. Taboas will e-send a Doodle poll to identify the date for the final SAAA meeting of the current academic year.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned ~4:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harvey Borovetz