

MINUTES – SAAA Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 4, 2018

Hillman 272

1. WELCOME

Dr. Borovetz called the meeting to order at ~3:05 PM. Dr. Juan Taboas participated via conference call.

2. UPDATE: OFFICE OF VETERAN SERVICES (MR. HERNANDEZ)

- a. Banner year
- b. Successful Pitt veteran alumni networking event: 100 participants
- c. Veterans Week: numerous activities including a special inaugural military recognition breakfast at which the Chancellor spoke and whose participants included 2-Medal of Honor recipients, including one WWII recipient!
- d. The Office of Veteran Services (OVS) continues to process student verifications while accommodating the change-over to the new GI bill
- e. OVS has processed \$8M in student benefits for 400 Pitt veteran students
- f. Very impressive is the fact that Pitt's reputation as a military friendly campus continues to be recognized in the national rankings: Pitt is rated 37th in nation in USNWR and 116th in 2019 military times.
- g. The OVS directed Toy Drive ends Dec 10. The Toy Drive is being sponsored by the Jerome Bettis Bus Stops Here organization. Boxes for drop-off are located at Posvar, Scaife and WPU. An FYI from Dr. Taboas --- Jerome Bettis ranks seventh among NFL rushing yard leaders in total yards gained, 13,662 yards.
- h. In response to a question Mr. Hernandez indicated he expects an increase in both veteran and veteran dependent students on campus going forward owing to Pitt's reputation of being military friendly. Interestingly, the split among veteran students and veteran dependent students is 50-50.

3. FOLLOW UP TOPICS – STUDENT LABOR SOLIDARITY & RESIDENCE LIFE (DR. GAU)

Dr. Gau brought up issues that he believes the Committee has not considered before.

1. Food insecurity (published 2018) and more generally financial insecurity amongst undergraduate and graduate students. Identifying the students is challenging.
 - a. Dr. Bonner has been working on this issue for 5-6 years. CoL realizes that Pitt has a high cost for tuition and that this might contribute, but Pitt tries to provide financial resources to the students to help.
 - i. It is requested that we refer such students to the Office of Student Affairs whom we are concerned about vis-à-vis financial insecurity.
 - b. Pitt has a food pantry. Only 1% use it, which is still too many. The highest number of users are international graduate students. Perhaps more students do not use the food pantry due to the stigma associated with doing so or students are embarrassed to seek help. In any event, can we be more proactive with students ... reach out and tell these students that we are aware of their financial difficulties, rather than telling them they have to address their financial hold. Our faculty mentors can connect students to resources.
 - c. Robin Kear asked how the provost's mission of meeting the financial needs of academically qualified students might address the food insecurity problem. This could have a major positive impact on students facing financial insecurity. According to Dr. Bonner Pitt's retention rate is 93% for first year students. Provost's vision is that Pitt is an engine of social mobility. We have to avoid risk of becoming an engine of social inequality.
2. Labor solidarity
 - a. Not talking about graduate students today
 - b. A key concern Dr. Gau has heard relates to the minimum wage for student workers, and how this relates to food insecurity. How can wages be supplemented to address in part financial insecurity.
 - c. Dr. Bonner discussed both "living wage" and "minimum wage." There is a debate about the economics of a \$15 minimum wage. Student affairs has debated this: most students earn more than the minimum wage, but if Dr. Bonner were required to pay all of his employees \$15 per hour, the Office of Student Affairs would by necessity be forced to reduce by 50% its number of employees.

3. Opioid Addiction: Collegiate Recovery Program

- a. Chancellor has established a multidisciplinary task force, which recommended, among other things, appropriate housing / space for the program to operate and for recovering students to live. The question is how to identify this space.
- b. Dr. Bonner indicated that opioid addiction is not as prevalent among college students versus alcohol and other drugs (marijuana, Adderall ...). It is not a crisis for college students.

4. **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES -- PITT'S ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC DISEASES (NAMELY TYPE 1 DIABETES) (DR. GLYNN)**

Dr. Nancy Glynn: Pitt accommodation for students with disabilities from type I diabetes as an example. Dr. Glynn has been an unofficial adviser/mentor for two such students. Dr. Glynn is also aware of the accommodations provided to such students at UVA.

- a. Dr. Glynn inquired as to whether the SAAA has knowledge that Pitt's Office of Disability Resources and Service is not as accommodating as other schools (such as UVA). This could be a recruitment and retention tool. Accommodating here means, among other things: class scheduling priority so that these students are not taking classes during usual meal hours; climate control residency; peer notes; additional time for exams, etc.
- b. Dr. Bonner indicated that Pitt's Office of Disability Resources and Service reports to the Office of Student Affairs and works with students to create an accommodation.
- c. Dr. Bonner and Dr. Glynn will meet to discuss these concerns and ways to address them.

5. **INNOVATIONS IN INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND MENTORING AT THE SWANSON SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING (DEAN SYLVANUS WOSU AND DR. STEVE ABRAMOWITCH)**

Dean Wosu and Dr. Abramowitch presented their highly successful programs in inclusion/diversity for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Most impressive is that both their undergraduate and graduate initiatives in this regard are funded by NSF. The accompanying attached PDF is a one-page summary of their outstanding presentations.

6. SCHEDULING (DAYS/TIMES) FOR SPRING, 2019 SAAA MEETINGS (ALL)

Not surprisingly, we did not have time for this topic. Let's handle it by e-mail.

Suggested dates/times for next 3-meetings:

>> Tuesday, January 22 @3 PM;

>> Tuesday, February 26 @3 PM;

>> Tuesday, March 26 @3 PM;

Please e-advise at your earliest convenience if these dates work for you. Once I e-hear back, I will reserve Hillman 272 for the meetings.

Finally, we have 2-agenda items for our January meeting:

>> Disability Resources and Services (Leigh Culley – Director)

>> Advising Dashboard (Dr. McCarthy)

I will e-contact these folks, once we have set our January date. Please feel free to e-mail me with additional agenda items for our meetings.

Happy Holidays & Respectfully Submitted,

Juan Taboas and Harvey Borovetz