

Annual Report
Student Welfare Committee, 2016-2017
University of Connecticut Senate

Committee Charge:

This committee shall review the conditions that contribute to the academic success, personal development and well-being of students, including available forms of financial aid. It may seek the opinion of the University Senate on such matters and make recommendations. The committee shall include one graduate student and two undergraduate students.

Committee Members:

- *Karen Bresciano, **Chair**, Student Affairs
- *Gerry Gianutsos, Pharmacy
- *Peter Gogarten, Molecular & Cell Biology
- *Karl Guillard, CAHNR
- *Shareen Hertel, Political Science
- *Patricia Jepson, CAHNR Academic Advisory
- *Robert Tilton, English
- *Jaci VanHeest, Education
- *Christine Wilson, Student Activities
- Thomas Briggs, Graduate Student Senate
- Kate Fuller, UConn Libraries
- Michael Gilbert, VP Student Affairs (Ex Officio Member)
- Kelsey Heidgerd, Undergraduate Student Government
- Kelly Kennedy, Business
- Erin Mason, Registrar's Office
- Tina McCarthy, Student Health Services
- David Mrotek, ISS-Academic Program Center
- Morty Ortega, CAHNR
- Shelly Reel, Office of Admissions

Cross-Representation:

Patricia Jepson- Diversity Committee
Tina McCarthy- Growth & Development

Report of Activities:

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Student Welfare Committee met with constituents across the University during six monthly meetings from September to April. The February meeting was cancelled due to snow.

Summary of Monthly Meetings:

Full minutes of each meeting can be found at
<http://www.senate.uconn.edu/SWC/swcminutes.html>

Over the course of the year, we invited several guests to our meetings to discuss many topics including the following:

Fraternity and Sorority Life- The SEC asked our committee to look at student welfare issues as it relates to the Greek community, specifically issues around underage drinking and other troubling behavior at university sponsored or related events. Todd Sullivan, the now former Director of

Fraternity and Sorority Life, came and spoke about the status of things in fraternity and sorority life. Todd gave a brief history and overview of the growth of fraternity and sorority life at the University of Connecticut. Todd explained that the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life provides overall expectations for students and the chapters set their own expectations/goals. Prior to students hosting events, staff members from Student Activities meet with students to discuss risk management. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life also offers programs for diversity, alcohol education, masculinity, and hazing prevention. Fraternity and Sorority Life has worked to build partnerships with campus partners including Off-Campus Student Services, Community Standards, and UConn Police.

Academic Integrity Policy- This topic was continued over from last year. There were anecdotal concerns that the Academic Integrity Policy was not being implemented by instructors as written, specifically, the requirement for instructors to inform Community Standards when they suspect academic misconduct and implement an academic consequence. The student welfare concern is that students might not be informed of their right to a hearing and Community Standards might not be able to recognize patterns of repeat violations without reports from instructors. Sarah Redlich, Graduate Assistant in the Dean of Students Office gave an overview of general findings from research on academic integrity processes and policies at UConn's peer and aspirant institutions. Sarah shared the results from a survey conducted in March 2016 on instructor and student perspectives on UConn's Academic Integrity Policy. The Committee discussed the benefits of instructors reporting alleged incidents of academic misconduct to Community Standards (information-sharing, educational/teachable moments). There was discussion about whether a determination should be made so faculty would only report incidents of academic misconduct that rise to a certain level of severity. The Committee talked about the need for faculty to understand the policy and whether or not faculty should meet with students before determining an academic consequence. The Committee proposed an idea of developing a flowchart that would illustrate the Academic Integrity Policy as well as provide bullet points with key aspects of the policy. There was discussion of asking Department heads/chairs to talk about the Academic Integrity Policy with faculty in their department. The Faculty Standards Committee and Scholastic Standards Committee will be involved in these conversations. The Committee's general determination was that this is an implementation issue and there are no proposed changes to the policy at this time.

Transportation- Bill Wendt, Tanya Husick and Dennis Solensky talked with the committee about concerns with transportation, especially for graduate students in the Willimantic area. Bill Wendt discussed that as a major research institution we need to do more to get students and staff to and from campus. WRTD is the only public transit available with just five 30-foot transit buses. He encouraged students to discuss their concerns about WRTD service options directly to WRTD. There are on-going talks about opportunities for Mansfield and Storrs to have greater service than just the service from Windham since no service comes from the Tolland and Vernon areas. The University is working with the State DOT, the governor's initiative on transportation, and the DOT commissioner. Tanya Husick discussed concentrating on marketing so people know what transportation options are available to them. Some recent initiatives include zip cars on campus, a ride share app for the university community to use to find people to ride with (for commutes, trips off campus etc.), and a car rental service for business use which might be made available for personal use as well. Dennis Solensky talked about tapping into federal and state

funding to ease the financial burden on UConn. He said support letters from UConn community members are critical to go along with public grants for UConn. There are also plans to do a full route restructuring to help with issues of overcrowding on the buses and to enhance the GPS system to improve tracking.

Student Health Services- Suzanne Onorato spoke about Student Health Services and shared the goal is to support student success, work hard to keep core to mission of making sure students remain healthy and graduate so they will be successful here and beyond. She said this work requires a full community to make it happen and the importance of engagement with faculty, staff, parents, community partners etc. Suzanne discussed how care is provided through the continuum: education and prevention, early identification, intervention and treatment, and crisis management. She said SHS is constantly looking to engage and educate the community. SHS is looking to move next on connecting prevention, early intervention and treatment to create an integrated care approach. Suzanne talked about looking at the population to identify students before they are in crisis. Statistics were shared including there are about 900 visits a week in the infirmary, which is about 40% of students. Staff in SHS look at each student's health history form (about 6,000/year) to develop plans of care for students with preexisting conditions.

Counseling & Mental Health Services- Betsy Cracco spoke about Counseling & Mental Health Services, particularly the core areas of clinical service, outreach, and training. Betsy discussed training for identifying students who are in a crisis and what to ask. The "Ask, Listen, Refer Program" is an online module that is a half-hour training designed for faculty/staff. Participants get a certificate for completion. There is also a faculty/staff tab on the CMHS website with helpful resources. Betsy shared the numbers in CMHS are increasing by a rate of about 20%/year. She also talked about the epidemic of anxiety and loneliness and how can we create a connected and responsive community. There is an increased utilization of counseling services and an increased demand for unscheduled care. Betsy shared that distress is normative and a public health approach that focuses on community-wide messaging of coping and social support has become the focus. For outreach and prevention efforts, CMHS has connected with over 9,000 students over the AY15-16 year not including parents, faculty and staff.

Academic Calendar/Student Stress- The committee discussed a possible change in Break (e.g. adding two days off in October) as a way to mitigate student stress and anxiety. Betsy Cracco said she is not sure if a two-day break would provide relief to students and the Thanksgiving break does not really help with volume. Betsy said student volume is not different from Spring to Fall. The peak usually happens around week 9 to 10 in the semester. Betsy said the summer is getting busier because more students are taking classes over the summer. The second semester (around January) also becomes busier.

The UConn Bookstore Group- Len Oser, General Manager at the UConn Bookstore and Neil LeBeau, Regional Manager at Barnes and Noble shared information about the Barnes and Noble transition to UConn over the past ten months. Len and Neil addressed concerns raised about textbooks prices. They stated that student welfare is very important to Barnes and Noble as a company. Barnes and Noble wants to be fully integrated into the campus, helping students have a successful education, and providing additional revenue to the school earmarked for student support, and being committed to affordability and access. Barnes and Noble started a price match

program to match textbook prices on Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. Len and Neil said renovation to the Bookstore will begin over the summer (immediately following commencement), a full-licensed Starbucks café will be added, and three separate rooms will be created for community/study space. Barnes and Noble will work with University events on scheduling the space to be used for a variety of purposes. Barnes and Noble has a Bookstore Advisory Group that has already met a couple of times. Len and Neil said there are about 3300 titles of books on campus and about 80% are available as a used book or a rental book. In the first year of operation, Barnes and Noble has saved students over \$1 million dollars. For course packs that were available at less expensive rates, there were issues with copyright clearances. Concerning Barnes and Noble human rights and social responsibility policy—the company is a FLA member and insists that all manufacturers of any products sold or purchased comply with FLA standards of human rights. In regard to concerns about healthy food options at the Bookstore, Barnes and Noble sells sandwiches and salads, removed the frying machine, and with the addition of the full Starbucks the Bookstore will have more healthy food options. Barnes and Noble wants to work with campus partners and wants to be a resource for people on campus.

Center for Students with Disabilities- Donna Korbel and Kimberly Mckeown from the Center for Students with Disabilities talked with the Committee about the accommodations process. After the student meets with a disability services provider, the disability provider writes an accommodation letter for the student and emails the student's faculty members. The Center cannot restrict when students register with the office based on civil rights legislation. Federal law requires the Center respond to students in a timely manner, review their documentation, make a determination about appropriate accommodations, and communicate these accommodations to faculty. University policy states students must register with the Center to receive accommodations. If students talk with faculty about their specific conditions and requests for accommodations in a particular class, it is encouraged to refer students to the Center for appropriate documentation and accommodations. The Center engages in an individualized, interactive process with every student. Retroactive accommodations are not something the Center does regularly but need to be considered. The Center is working with many students who have varying needs including students with ADHD, Autism, psychological health conditions, learning disabilities, and chronic health conditions. The Center sees a huge increase in numbers of students after midterms. Currently as of 4/12/17, the Center is working with about 3,340 students, although these numbers continue to increase on a daily basis.

Anticipated and Continuing Topics for Next Year include the following:

Smoke Free Campus Policy

Securing academic buildings in the evenings

Safety concerns regarding motorbikes, lack of crosswalks and lighting around campus

Finals Schedule and Finals Rescheduling By-Laws

Reading Day and Academic Calendar Issues

Respectively Submitted on 4/17/17 by

Karen L. Bresciano, Chair

Sarah Redlich, Graduate Assistant