

Senate Student Welfare Committee

Annual Report

2021-2022

Charge: This committee shall review the conditions that contribute to the academic success, personal development, physical and mental well-being of students, and available forms of financial aid. It may seek the opinion of the Senate on such matters and make recommendations.

Members:

Karen Bresciano, Chair, The Graduate School
*Sheila Andrew, CAHNR, Animal Science
*Fabiana Cardetti, CLAS, Mathematics
*Michael Morrell, CLAS, Political Science
*Colleen Spurling, CLAS, Molecular and Cell Biology
Beatriz Almeida, USG Representative
Bryanna Anderson, Center for Students with Disabilities
Rebecca Bacher, CLAS Academic Services
Chelsea Cichocki, Center for Academic Programs
Kimberly Duby, Dean of Students Office
Arthur Galinat, International Student and Scholar Services
Michael Gilbert, VP of Student Affairs (Ex Officio Member)
Renee Gilberti, ISS Academic Programs Center
Kay Gruder, Center for Career Development

Laine Kingo, Business, Advising and Compliance Specialist
Sheila Lafferty, University Libraries
Lindsey Lemoine, Athletics
Katherine McCarthy, Admissions
Tina McCarthy, Student Health & Wellness, Nursing
Jennifer Morenus, PRLACC
Suzanne Peters, Financial Aid
Daniel Pfeiffer, Graduate Student
Morty Ortega, CAHNR, Natural Resources and the Environment
David Richards, CLAS, Political Science
Jennifer Gattilia Tibbetts, Registrar's Office
Peter Tribuzio, Student Services, Hartford Campus
Sandy Valentine, SHaW, Health Promotion Manager

Thursday, September 2

Discussed structure and topics for the year

Thursday, October 7

Our committee met with Leo Lachut, Assistant Director of First Year Programs & Learning Communities, Director of Academic Support. Leo spoke with us about the status of our first and second year students coming back to campus, while still in the midst of the global pandemic. Students have had issues with connection both with peers and with faculty. Masks, while prudent, make connection difficult. Many students are juniors and are on campus for the first time. Some student have been thriving with the on-line curriculum, but many have struggled.

Thursday, November 4

Our guest, Kristina Stevens, Director, SHaW Mental Health, spoke with us about SHaW's focus on cultivating optimal health and lifelong wellbeing for every student. She shared that they typically see about 12% of the student population. SHaW-MH offers students a personalized approach that promotes well being and meets their mental health needs. They have seen an uptick of anxiety and depression.

Thursday, December 2

Zach Claybaugh, Student Success Librarian came to speak with us about the First Day Complete program that was being explored with Barnes & Noble. This service would be a certain cost savings for many students, but there were concerns that it might catch other students unaware and result in higher costs among other concerns. We agreed to speak with the Provost about this at our next meeting.

Frank Tuitt, Chief Diversity Officer spoke with us about bias incidents affecting inclusivity in our community. ODI is working to be proactive in creating spaces to have important dialogues. Fatigue and exhaustion has been observed in our faculty, staff, and students. ODI is looking for ways to increase they staff to increase capacity to support efforts across the campus. The ODI Faculty Fellows program is active and seems to be effective, with a deliberate emphasis on the needs of graduate students.

Thursday, February 3

Our guests were Carl Lejuez, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs; Jeffrey Shoulson, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost; Dan Burkey, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Outreach & Diversity, School of Engineering. They came to speak with us about the Future of Learning Report and ideas for implementation.

We also had an extensive conversation about the First Day Complete program. Provost Lejuez shared that he had initially been skeptical about the program, but when representatives from USG asked the Provost's office to look at it again, Michael Bradford stepped in. The committee was impressed by many of the points of the contract that are protective of students accidentally utilizing the service (and perhaps over paying for books.) There remained other concerns about how disability accommodations would be fulfilled and what the impact might be on the initiatives to encourage open source materials.

Thursday, March 3

During this meeting, we took the opportunity to discuss several significant issues on campus affecting students, the war in Ukraine, bias incidents, Title IX response, and COVID protocols. The University has been quick to explore ways we can support students affected by the war, including financial aid possibilities, Bursar deferrals, summer housing options, and ISSS/Global Affairs reaching out to individual students.

Thursday, April 7

Nathan Fuerst, Vice President for Enrollment Management joined us, along with other interested and invested stakeholders, to talk about regional students living at Storrs. We agree that no one division is solely responsible for the support of these students, we do need someone to be the steward/shepherd in leading a group to ensure these students needs are met. Nathan appeared willing to take on that role. We also agreed that Undergraduate Advising should join Enrollment Management and Student Affairs at the decision-making table regarding this initiative as so many of the implications impact advising staff as well and students' academic well-being.

Some remaining questions are (1) How we are communicating this program to students (especially Avery Point where there is no public transportation and Business students at Hartford that will never be able to finish their program in Storrs)? (2) How are students oriented to their campuses (currently just to regional campus and not at all to Storrs)? (3) Should we reexamine campus change policies and procedures for this population. (4) Should we relook at how we calculate credits to determine "home campus"? (5) Who determines the metrics of success and if it is "worth it"?

Thursday, May 5

TBD- meeting not occurred at the time of submission