Student Welfare Committee

Final Report
2014-2015

Members:

A Lanning, Chair (Graduate Student)
J. D'Angelo, Vice Chair (Criminal Justice)

P. Alessandra (Academic Affairs), K. Aurelio (Student), S. Brown (Student), P. Carey (Chief-UPD), L. Galka (Acad. Outreach), M. Holinger (Student), S. Latty (Student), M. Manzi (Student), M. McKenzie (Student), A. M. Sokol (Chemistry), E. Stempniak (Student) C. Stotz (Student), Tara Territo (Student), T. Tomion (Student), S. Velez (Student Life), S. Weber (Elem. Ed. & Reading), T. Williams (Student)

Charge: The Student Welfare Committee examines matters and recommends policy concerning student life. Such matters include all aspects of the college as a total learning and living environment as it may be affected by:

1. The students’ intellectual/academic, cultural, social, psychological and physical well-being;
2. Including academic matters,
3. College and student services, and
4. Faculty-student-administration relations.

Name of Chair Submitting Report: Ashley Lanning, Chair, Jill D’Angelo, Vice Chair

Anticipated Vacancies in 2015-2016 for Committee Members:

K. Aurelio (student), S. Brown (student), M. Holinger (student), S. Latty (student), M. Manzi (student), M. McKenzie (student), E. Stempniak (student), C. Stotz (student), T. Territo (student), T. Tomion (student), T. Williams (student). Underlined members of the committee may be willing to serve again for the 2015-2016 school year.

Approximate Number of Meetings:

Five meetings
Report:

In the fall semester of 2014, the chair first informed the committee about the Student Welfare charge and the goal for the school year. Next, the following issues were addressed:

- **Bengal Pause**: The committee discussed whether the school should allow professors to teach during this allotted time. Students were against allowing classes to be taught during this time. Many staff members agreed that the Bengal Pause time is very helpful for students to be involved on campus and it helps create a livelier atmosphere on campus.
- **StartUpNY**: The chair explained this initiative to the committee and asked the committee members how they see students being involved. Companies may be hiring students as employees or as interns, and the committee wanted to make sure that it would be a learning experience for students, not just “busy work.”
- **Judicial Processes**: The committee briefly discussed the current process for judicial hearings. No recommendations were made, but the Vice-Chair made the committee aware of current policies and procedures.
- **Community Perception of SUNY Buffalo State**: Students, staff, and faculty members of the committee conversed about the current reputation that Buffalo State has in the community. As members of this campus, committee members expressed their disappointment that this institution is not more highly regarded in Western New York. There was a bit of casual discussion about how we could personally change this perception, but we agreed to discuss it at a later point.
- **Tobacco Free Campus**: All members of the committee expressed their frustration with the current state of Buffalo State as a tobacco free campus. Many members of this institution are still smoking on the campus, including students, faculty, staff, and police officers. Because there are no longer ashtrays at the entrances to buildings, the committee noted that there are now cigarette butts around the campus. We also talked about e-cigarettes, and a few members stated that they have experienced students using these in class.
- **Transportation Contract**: A question was posed regarding graduate students being able to use the NFTA bus system like the undergraduate students do. A bit of information was given regarding the transportation contract.
- **Parking**: Students expressed their concerns with the lack of parking on campus. Not only is it inconvenient for students, but it has also become a safety issue. Many students feel uncomfortable and unsafe walking from buildings on campus to their car that has been parked very far away at night.
- **Buffalo State Creed**: Dr. Kevin Railey of the Graduate School asked the committee to review the Buffalo State Creed. After reviewing the creed and discussing its purpose
In the Spring semester of the 2015 academic school year, the Student Welfare Committee discussed the following issues:

- **Graduate Student 721 Class**: The I&R Committee brought to the Senate a proposal to change the timeframe for graduate students completing their Master's project or thesis. They recommended that students no longer be allowed four semesters to complete their project/thesis, and that moving forward, they only be allowed one semester to do so. The committee was very against this change for many reasons. Among these reasons, they believed that this will create unnecessary stress on both graduate students and their advisors. They also were concerned that this short time frame would decrease the quality of projects. This proposal was later sent back to the I&R committee for further review.

- **Student Fees for 2015-2016**: After a presentation about the proposed student fees for the following academic year, the Student Welfare committee voted to present this motion at the College Senate. The motion was unanimously supported in the Senate, and it has been attached to this report.

- **Bengal Pause**: Again, the Student Welfare committee expressed their concerns regarding classes being taught during this dedicated student time. With little time left in the semester, the committee agreed to pass this on to the 2015-2016 Student Welfare Committee.
School Closures: President Conway-Turner asked the Student Welfare committee to review the current policies for school closures (in lieu of the November 2014 storm in Buffalo that resulted in campus closing). The committee briefly discussed this concern, but overall, they agreed that the closures were handled well. However, they agreed that if campus is closed, online classes should also be postponed. Many students use computer resources on campus to complete their coursework, so they did not find it fair that some online classes continued through these closures.

Graduate Student Bill of Rights: The Graduate Student Association President, Andrea Gustafson, asked the Student Welfare committee to review the Graduate Student Bill of Rights draft. The committee reviewed this document in its draft state, and determined that they find it to be a necessary addition to the Graduate School. The committee voted to support this document moving forward.

Experiential Learning: President Conway-Turner charged the Student Welfare committee to come up with a student’s definition of “experiential learning” in wake of the new mandate on SUNY Buffalo State. After a lengthy discussion, the committee agreed that the majority of students on campus are already meeting this requirement through service learning, internships, student teaching, cumulative projects, lab requirements, and research. They recommended that each department be asked to find their courses or requirements that would comply with this mandate. Should a department be unable to find a current offering that meets these requirements, those departments may be able to determine the best course of action for their students to complete experiential learning.
STUDENT WELFARE COMMITTEE FEE MOTION

- Whereas enrollments have declined for the past three years, causing a reduction in revenues for the broad-based fee accounts,

- Whereas fringe benefit costs continue to increase expenses,

- Whereas in the past two years administration has balanced the accounts by reducing administrative overhead expenses, internal reallocations, expenditure controls, and fee increases,

- SWC recommends that the College Senate support the administration’s broad-based fee increase of 2.1% (or $22) for the 2015-2016 fiscal year, with the following individual changes: increases for Athletics = $11.00; Health = $4.00; and Technology = $7.00.