Student Welfare Committee

Final Report
2017-2018

Members:

K. Blakes, Chair (Undergraduate Student)
S. Macho, Vice Chair (Career & Technical Education)

K. Ameyaw (Student), M. Burch (Student), X. Chen (Student), A. Gordon (Student), A. Liao (Communication), M. Miszkiewicz (Prof. Staff-RITE.), J. Popovich (Career & Technical Education), S. Schnaars (Student), M. Snow (Student), S. Thorpe (Student), S. Velez (Student Life, Admin. Liaison), S. Weber (Elem. Ed. & Reading), Y. Xuan (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: Keyshawn Blakes, Chair, Steve Macho, Faculty Vice Chair

Anticipated Vacancies in 2018-2019 for Committee Members:

We anticipate a need to recruit committee members in the fall; especially students. Some of the student are graduating seniors.

Approximate Number of Meetings:

The Student Welfare Committee held 6 meetings this academic year. (November, December, February, March, April & May)

Annual Report:

The Student Welfare Committee discussed, researched and paid due consideration to a number of topics this academic year, and put one motion to the full senate; Request for a Master Schedule
Topics of the Student Welfare Committee meetings:

- Residential Housing policies; especially seniors not living on-campus
- Request of a master schedule
- Disparity of demographics among staff & faculty relative to students
- Registration & PIN Numbers
- Indigenous Peoples Day
- Free feminine products available on campus
- Access to stage for disabled at commencement

Status of these issues are summarized below:

**Residential Housing policies**

The committee drafted the following motion. It was determined further research, and implementation consideration are required for this to be entertained in the full Senate. This item is now categorized as “old Business” on planned agendas for the next academic year.

**Request for a Formal Review of Dormitory Policy**

WHEREAS, Buffalo State students whom have resided in facilities on campus for years are compelled to leave their domicile because they have succeeded in their academic endeavors to become seniors,

WHEREAS, Buffalo State students whom have become part of the campus culture are compelled to leave their domicile because they have become seniors, and

WHEREAS, Buffalo State students whom have become seniors may incur additional expenses and hardships because they are compelled to leave their on-campus housing, and

WHEREAS, a portion of Buffalo State students whom have resided in facilities on campus and were forced to leave campus, are now completing their degrees elsewhere, where they may live on a (different) campus with benefits of seniority, and

WHEREAS, it is likely these future alumni will recall the treatment they received for expressing a loyalty to complete their degrees after being removed from their domicile, it is reasonable to expect they may not wish to continue their relationship with Buffalo State, and

WHEREAS, in the course of human relations longevity typically leads to further endearment, and when longevity leads to estrangements such relations can be classified as abusive and extremely unthoughtful,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Buffalo State conduct a formal review with student participation of the Policies regarding housing on campus with a priority placed on the ethics of building and maintaining good relationships with those students who reside in the campus facilities and will become the future alumni of Buffalo State.
Request of a master schedule

The committee drafted the following motion for consideration in the Senate. It was introduced in the April Senate meeting, and will be entertained in the full Senate with a vote anticipated in May.

Request for a Master Schedule of Courses

WHEREAS, Buffalo State Students want to graduate on time, and

WHEREAS, Buffalo State departments and degree programs do not all regularly and openly publish a schedule forecasting when courses required for degree completion are to be offered, and

WHEREAS, Buffalo State Students lack the ability to predict when required courses are to be offered in any particular term, and when said required courses time-conflict with other required courses from the same department, and

WHEREAS, Buffalo State Students who may lack the basic information to make plans of when to take their classes, and

WHEREAS, advisors may encounter difficulties determining the priority of selecting one class over another because they do not know when other required classes will be offered, and

WHEREAS, the use of “course by contract” or “independent study” cannot be intelligently made in absence of a Master Schedule,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Buffalo State Administration direct all degree programs to publish a regular two-year schedule stating when all required courses are planned to be offered on a two-year schedule, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED required courses within a department can be designated to not time conflict with other required courses, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED if required courses which were planned to be offered are not offered, that such circumstance justifies arrangements for use of “course by contract” or “independent study” and other alternatives.

Disparity of demographics among staff & faculty relative to students

The committee drafted the following motion. It was determined further research, and implementation consideration are required for this to be entertained in the full Senate. This item is now categorized as “old Business” on planned agendas for the next academic year.

Request for a Formal Review of Policies for Staffing

WHEREAS, Buffalo State the composition of Staff and faculty demographics are different from those of the student population,

WHEREAS, a number of efforts and initiative from Buffalo State & SUNY have been enacted to address the divergent demographic representation among the groups, students are not necessarily
aware of these efforts, and students may choose different courses of action (perhaps plan to become university faculty) if they had an awareness of efforts and initiative to address this issue, WHEREAS, Student Welfare Committee members believe students perform better academically when they have faculty that are the same demographic as they are and also feel more comfortable having relationships with staff, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Buffalo State conduct a series of workshops and student activities to raise awareness existing efforts and gather new ideas regarding staffing and acquisition of faculty such that policies and strategies to bring the demographics of students and Staff & Faculty into a closer proportion may be realized.

Registration & PIN Numbers
This topic was discussed extensively, and administrative actions addressed the concerns.

Indigenous Peoples Day
The committee entertained this issue as a result of a University Faculty Senate resolution, and drafted (or slightly edited the UFS version) the following motion. It was determined further research, and implementation consideration are required for this to be entertained in the full Senate. This item is now categorized as “old Business” on planned agendas for the next academic year.

WHEREAS, The University Faculty Senate in at its 177th Plenary Meeting set forth Resolution 177-01-1: To Recognize the Second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples’ Day, and

WHEREAS in 1977 the International NGO Conference on Discrimination against Indigenous Populations in the Americas began discussing the replacement of Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day; and

WHEREAS there is growing recognition and understanding in the United States that the celebration of Columbus’ “Discovery of America” is insulting to indigenous peoples and directly contrary to the fact that a way of life for indigenous people was irrevocably impacted with the arrival of the first European immigrants to the Americas; and

WHEREAS since 1992 more than 58 municipalities including the states of Minnesota, Vermont, and Alaska have chosen to celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of Columbus Day (as of 9 October 2017); and

WHEREAS many of our SUNY campuses reside on land once inhabited by the Haudenosaunee people; and

WHEREAS SUNY is committed to creating campus communities that are inclusive, diverse and representative of all people; and

WHEREAS campuses have recognized the importance of this matter and have created resolutions supporting an “Indigenous Peoples’ Day,” and no longer list Columbus Day on their school calendars; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Buffalo State Senate endorses the SUNY Student Assembly resolution 1516-115, “Indigenous Peoples’ Day”; and

BEIT FURTHER RESOLVED that Buffalo State Senate requests recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of Columbus Day on their respective campus calendars; and

BEIT FURTHER RESOLVED that Buffalo State faculty are encouraged to engage in sustained and meaningful discussions with Indigenous Peoples to further Buffalo State’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as stated in the BOT Resolution of September 10th 2015; and

BEIT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Buffalo State President is charged to bring this matter forward to the Union of University Professions and to the SUNY Board of Trustees requesting that they change the name of the holiday celebrated or listed on SUNY calendars on the second Monday of October to Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

Free feminine products available on campus
The committee entertained this issue as result of a University Faculty Senate resolution, and drafted (or slightly edited the UFS version) the following motion. Further research is required to determine if this matter had already appeared before the Senate (potentially decades ago). This item is now categorized as “old Business” on planned agendas for the next academic year.

Provide Free Access to Menstrual Products at All Campus Restrooms
WHEREAS, The University Faculty Senate in at its 177th Plenary Meeting set forth Resolution 177-02-1: To Provide Free Access to Menstrual Products at All SUNY Campuses in All Restrooms,

WHEREAS the SUNY Board of Trustees September 10, 2015 Resolution desires to “make SUNY the most inclusive higher education system in the country”; and

WHEREAS the SUNY Board of Trustees September 10, 2015 Resolution’s Guiding Principles state that “diversity and inclusiveness are integral components of the highest quality academic programs and the strongest campus climate. Diversity is essential to excellence in the university setting” and that “SUNY’s statutory mission makes clear its responsibility to provide the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population of New York State”; and

WHEREAS campuses should work to “ensure that services are in place to support retention of faculty and students) and foster student completion at a rate that closes existing achievement gaps; and implement programs and strategies to establish a welcoming environment for all”; and

WHEREAS the federal government recognizes the need for improved affordability and access to menstrual products and “in early August 2017, the U.S. government began to offer tampons and a variety of sanitary pads free to federal inmates” (1) ; and
WHEREAS New York State is a national model for progress in menstrual equity: “On July 13, 2016, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio signed legislation, with unanimous support, providing free access to feminine hygiene products to all public schools, prisons and homeless shelters in the city’s five boroughs (Bill Intros 1122-A, 1123-A and 1128-A). And, “On July 21, 2016, Governor Cuomo signed legislation eliminating local and state sales tax on feminine hygiene products (billA.7555-A/S.7838)”; and

WHEREAS female student body is 239,073 (54%); and

WHEREAS many of students in SUNY are financially fragile: 75% of all SUNY students receive financial aid; and

WHEREAS if campuses do provide menstrual products, female students must ask for these products at a campus health center; if not, they must buy their own; and

WHEREAS if students cannot afford these products, they may miss class, which could affect their ability to be successful in their classes and complete their programs in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS there is national foundation support in place through Free the Tampons, to help institutions overcome the financial concerns of this exact type of policy and “provide education and resources that empower advocates to create change for women nationwide.” (4)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Buffalo State support students on our campuses who need these products by developing and funding programs that provide access to free menstrual products in all campus restrooms. (2,3)

BACKGROUND:

1. Federal law to allow free access to menstrual products for inmates.


2. www.suny.edu


Access to stage for disabled at commencement
This matter was addressed by administration.

Recently (2017 commencement) a student was temporarily disabled and needed to use a walker. She was very slow. Commencement was very difficult for her with a walker. We need a better way to help disabled students get to all the different offices to which they need to go prior to commencement.