Student Welfare Committee

Final Report
2018-2019

Members:

Aishwarya (Ash) Patwardhan, Chair (Undergraduate Student)
S. Macho, Vice Chair (Career & Technical Education)

M. Miszkiewicz, MS, (Pro-Staff, RITE), S. Maguire, (Faculty, SNSS), E. Carl, (Faculty, SOP)
V. Masci, (Pro-Staff, Senate Office), R. Doyle, (Assistant Vice President, Weigel), A. Nailor, (Student), V. Murray, (Student), K. Williams, (Student), J. Mauk, (Student), Z. Greenberg, (Student), M. Burch, (Grad Student), N. Gray, (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: Aishwarya (Ash) Patwardhan, Chair, Steve Macho, Faculty Vice Chair

Anticipated Vacancies in 2019-2020 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 5 meetings this academic year. (October 11, November 15, December 5, February 8, & March 8)
Annual Report:

The Student Welfare Committee discussed, researched and paid consideration to several topics this academic year, and one item (Residential Housing policies; especially seniors not living on-campus) introduced last academic year was resolved.

Topics of the Student Welfare Committee meetings:

- Residential Housing policies; especially seniors not living on-campus
  - Summary of resolution is on pages 3 & 4 of this report
- Request of a master schedule. Motion Tabled May 2018
  - Draft motion is on page 5
- Disparity of demographics among staff & faculty relative to students
  - Draft motion is on page 6
- Treatment of minority & international Students on campus

A motion tabled last academic year, remained on the table: Request for a Master Schedule. Text of the motion is listed below.

Status of these issues are summarized below:

Residential Housing policies

Last academic year, the committee drafted a motion (see below). It was determined further research, and implementation consideration were required for this to be entertained in the full Senate. This item was categorized as “old Business” on the initial agenda for the SWC this year.

This issue was resolved by an administrative action of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Timothy Gordon. An announcement of policy change was sent to registered students on February 6th. 2019. The text of the memorandum is included below.

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.

Text of a February 6, 2019 communication to all registered students

Dear Bengals:
Welcome back to campus for the spring 2019 semester—we have some exciting news to share, particularly for our rising seniors!

During my first year at Buffalo State, I have talked with a number of students about a college policy, established in 2016, that precluded seniors from requesting on-campus housing. This policy was implemented at a time when demand for on-campus housing far exceeded the number of available rooms. The policy also afforded the college the opportunity to complete several much-needed renovations to residence halls in order to provide our students with updated on-campus living and learning environments.

With several renovations to the Tower Complex now complete or nearing completion, and the addition of more than 200 new beds through the conversion of Bishop Hall back to a residence hall last year, we have made significant progress toward our goal of improving and expanding our residence hall offerings. Following productive consultations with students, student leadership, and the campus administration, we are pleased to announce that seniors will once again be permitted to request on-campus housing, beginning in fall 2019—two years ahead of the original timeline.

Students, including rising seniors, wishing to view the on-campus housing options for fall 2019 should visit https://residencelife.buffalostate.edu/students. In the coming weeks, you will receive an email with housing sign up instructions. The housing site will also include a link to sign up for housing, pay your housing deposit, and view your 2019 housing assignment (once the entire campus housing process is
We look forward to seeing many of you in our residence halls next fall and should you have any questions, please call or e-mail the Residence Life office at (716) 878-3000 or reslife@buffalostate.edu.

Sincerely,

Timothy Gordon
Vice President for Student Affairs

Request of a master schedule

The committee drafted the following motion for consideration in the Senate. It was introduced in the April 2018 Senate meeting and was tabled at the full Senate in May 2018.

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.