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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Student Life Committee Meeting, Tuesday, September 22, 2009

Arts & Sciences Student Life Committee

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Approved Minutes
Student Life Committee Meeting
9/22/09 12:30-1:45 Olin Library Bib Lab

Members Present:

Micki Meyer, Denise Cummings, Karen Hater, Cristina M. Figueroa, Alex Brown, William Boles, Ashley Kistler, Patricia Tomé, and Derrick Paladino.

Guests:

Karen Hater

Andy Hughes

Allison Wallrapp

Alik Alfus

Anne Hillo

Brent Turner

Ken Miller

Leon Hayner

Brandon Robinson

Jesse Morano

- I. Call to Order: Boles calls the meeting to order at 12:32.

- II. Announcements
 - A. The first campus wide faculty meeting will be held this Thursday, Sept. 24. Roger Casey will announce that we are doing a national search for the Dean of Student Affairs. The position's current occupant, Karen Hater, is welcome to apply. The search committee will consist of a small committee of people, including three faculty members, a staff member, and a student. Meyer asks whose chairing the search. Boles responds that the search chair is currently unknown, but the SLC will be represented on the committee at Boles request.
 - B. Alex Brown announces that SGA has assigned its senators who will sit on the SLC, and that they will attend the next SLC meeting.
 - C. Boles shows the committee the front page of the *Sandspur*, an article about McKean's RAs. He asks if we need to talk about it? Brown states that a friend of his replaced an RA in McKean. Hayner replies that two RAs in McKean were asked to resign based on conduct violations. Residence Life has hired new RAs and they are currently completing training. All positions have been filled. There was only a week gap in RAs. At all moments, there was at least one RA per floor

in McKean. Hater responds that every year, we lose some RAs and some peer mentors. There are tight rules that they have to follow when they take leadership positions, so if they break policy, they are removed. Tomé asks who makes the rules that the RAs and peer mentors must abide by. Boles replies that they must sign contracts. Hayner states that they must have a good GPA, be in good judicial standing, etc. Tomé expresses her concerns about the current system. Her peer mentor removed last year for attending a party with a freshman who just happened to be there and as a result was released from his responsibility. The punishment seems a little excessive. Boles states that the SLC can talk about this more at future date. Hayner responds that the punishment for code violations depends on what the RAs and peer mentors have done and whether it or not it jeopardizes their credibility with students

D. Boles calls for the approval of the minutes from the last meeting. Brown gives motion and everyone approves them unanimously.

III. Old Business

A. Boles states that the SLC had its housing forum last week. Jim Small from the AAC co-hosted it. Small gave us, the SLC, the go ahead to move forward alone after the forum. He felt that the issue of group housing is all a Student Life Committee issue. It's SLCs issue with the Office of Residence Life. What comments do people have?

i. Brown states that he personally feels that it is more crucial for Greek life organizations to have their housing to promote their brotherhood and sisterhood. However, he agrees with competition and believes that other organizations should have the ability to compete. Competition breeds excellence. Tomé comments on the students' comment during the forum that they would get too stressed out over having to compete for housing. She states that what seemed out of line there was that why did students feel that they would have problems if they were doing what they should do as an organization. She thinks that students see this as a hassle. She doesn't see it that way. If you are doing your job, why worry? And the Greek organizations said that they are doing great things, so then why worry? Hater responds that the current process requires that organizations are doing and are continuing everything they should do. She feels that the student's comment wasn't really about worrying about losing their house, but instead the anxiety. The anxiety is on the Greek presidents every year

to save their house, so they have too much anxiety about it. It isn't the work that's involved in keeping it, it's the anxiety and pressure that you have to keep things in line in order to save the house. Anne Hilo, who is a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma, asks what happened at the meeting? Boles responds that because the SLC advises Dean about what to do about issues like housing, we were trying to answer the following questions: What is going to work best for Rollins as a community? Do we keep what is currently in place, or do we change it to allow for competition? Anne responds that her concern about the housing issue is that competition for housing is more of an anxiety...She states that sororities and fraternities as organizations need a little more guidance about what to do to meet Rollins' expectations. They request that faculty hold monthly meetings to mentor them about what they are looking for and what they want them to do to work better and to earn housing. She completely agrees that housing shouldn't just be handed to the Greeks, but they need to know what to do better to meet school's guidelines. She wants to know how sororities can work with both Rollins' guidelines and with their national guidelines. Greek Life wants guidance to learn and grow and be living, learning communities. Boles replies that both Andy Hughes and Residence Life has guidelines for Greek organizations to help them to know what to do. Since they already have them, what are they missing? Anne replies that the current system is confusing because Greek organizations have so many guidelines to follow. How can they reconcile them?

- ii. Hayner states that he had a hard time deducing the faculty's views on the housing issue as a whole. There was not a lot of faculty attendance to the forum. Paul Stephenson and other faculty in attendance were all for faculty being involved. However, other faculty members stated that faculty don't have time to make sure that group housing is successful.
- iii. Meyer states that she reflected and listened and thought that the students did a really good job of sharing that day. Housing is the catalyst for many other issues we need to consider, five issues in particular: 1. housing 2. philosophy around living space 3. values, 4. fraternity and sorority life, what kept coming up was people talking about Greek life on campus and what they do and what they don't do. We need more opportunities for an open and honest dialogue. Finally, 5. students want faculty to be involved in their lives. This is why there is tension, and the tension is not just about housing, but about all of these issues. Hater replies that she had the same reaction and came up with mostly the same issues. She thinks that the SLC needs to sort this out, to figure out what it the core issues really are.

Boles replies that these issues can be split up. The issue of competition for group housing doesn't have to have anything to do with faculty as a whole. We need to figure out if faculty want to get involved, where is it that they want to get involved. Currently, few faculty are involved with Greeks. Maybe there are more possibilities for faculty to get involved with their houses. Another issue is the larger initiative, Rick Fogelsong's idea that maybe Greeks shouldn't have priority at all. Boles is not sure where the faculty stand on this. However, he thinks that the faculty would say that what happens in the residence halls has to do with what happens in the classroom. Cummings points out that the result of the multi-year survey of faculty undertaken by previous SLCs say that faculty don't want to get involved in things like housing. Maybe we need to revisit this issue with another survey. Survey asked how much faculty wanted to be involved in advising Greek organizations. The answer was not much. Boles replies that he and Allison Wallrapp met with Laurie Joyner to talk about what her issues were with the Social Honor Code. Laurie created a master list from the FSARS that shows that the faculty are actually involved, so this is a better document to look at than the survey. Allison Wallrapp replies that with respect to the faculty getting involved, she wants to invite all faculty to a progressive dinner on Sept. 30 at 7 PM at Kappa Kappa Gamma, talking about what Residential Organizations have done over the last year.

- iv. Hater states that another question is whether or not there is faculty interest or investment in Living Learning Communities. For a while, Rollins tried to get faculty to want to do LLC, but is that the case now? Is there really a need to expand housing so that we can accommodate them? Are there LLCs that need a place? Not always an issue of LLC vs. RO. If we really have an interest in expanding them, then we need to explore that. But it's currently unclear if there is any interest.
- v. Miller thanks the committee for having him back. He sees that there are a bunch of issues with the housing situation. The first issue is continuity. Why does Rollins keep changing things, like deans and director of Residence Life. There is confusion about issues like housing because there is no continuity. We don't know what direction we are going. Each dean gives a different direction. Cummings brought up the point of the survey, and he feels that the SLC beat it into the ground for two years and 90% of faculty did not want to be involved in co-curriculum. Why would faculty want to get involved in dictating where students live? Aren't there

are people for this? Why can't we take a portion of existing buildings and re-assign its purpose? Why take housing away from anyone? What qualifies someone for even being on the list for housing? What are the criteria for that? The SLC needs to figure that out. We aren't good at saying here are the rules and you either follow them or not. We keep giving people probation and chances, etc. Why don't we get rid of people who violate rules? Why do we use probation? Comparing academic driven LLCs to socially driven groups is like comparing apples to oranges. If a Greek organization is in good standing, it should stay in its house. If not, then it should get thrown out and someone else can have it. But we can't have LLC competing with social organizations because they (the LLCs) will win every time. Student leaders on campus are the least appreciated because they have pressure from all sides. Their members think they are caving to the administration, and they are under pressure from administration, it is difficult. He has been the advisor to TKE, and seen that many presidents have no idea what they are doing because they are not prepared for these roles. We need to train future leaders throughout their careers for these leadership positions. We need to recognize that kids will make mistakes, and we need to help train them ahead of time. 15 years ago, many colleges moved fraternities and sororities away. Then they brought them back five years later, because once they are off campus, you can't control them and bad things happen. If they are on campus, you have some control over what is going on, it is safer for everyone.

- vi. Boles asks why is it that Greeks can't have a floor or a whole hall in a dorm? Why do they have to get priority housing? Why are campus houses given exclusively to them? Why aren't we emphasizing other college organizations in our housing allocation? Miller replies that we've had this discussion before. Organizations feel more pride, etc, when they are in houses. If you give students a not-well cared for house, they will treat it as such. Give them something nice, they take care of it. Tomé replies that when she went to the housing meeting on Friday, she was shocked that the members of the Greek houses have to deal with this housing situation. At her previous institutions, it was an honor to have Greek organizations on campus. At some schools, when you graduate, the honor goes to sports team, who you remember fondly. At Rollins, Greek houses are a sense of pride and are what people will remember afterwards. She agrees that Greek organizations are different from other organizations and should not have to compete with LLC. Why don't we buy more

housing with the money Duncan has for buying real estate? Why build a hotel and not housing? Wallrapp replies that it is because there is not a lot of housing nearby for guests and scholars to stay in. Tomé responds that she understands this, but why aren't we making housing a priority too, especially housing for LLCs. We don't want LLCs to compete with Greek houses, but instead to make more spaces available. Boles replies that the difference between Rollins and many other colleges is that the Greek houses are not owned by the Greek organizations. They are owned by the college.

- vii. Meyer says that when we talked about faculty involvement, we still don't really understand what the possibilities are for LLCs. We need to send the faculty to conferences to learn about this. Currently, what is more powerful to faculty than the good work the organizations are doing is who is undoing the work. Greek organizations need to figure out how to control people who are undoing the work. Meyer feels that is hard to see fraternities and sororities as social organizations. They started as academic organizations, and still are for the most part. We need to figure out why people see them as social, and not academic, organizations. Hayner replies that when we build the new residence hall on schedule, that if there is a desire for smaller houses, maybe we can do that. We go back to president and the architect and make the buildings smaller. Or maybe we say now that we will reserve one floor for something like clean living and designate it as such now. A student, Brandon Robinson, states that if a Greek organization had a floor in part of residence hall, that would not be right for them. They wouldn't have things like chapter rooms, etc, that they need to discuss future of their organizations. He feels that too much of the good that Greek organizations offer for Rollins is overshadowed by bad that they do at intervals throughout the year. The Greek organizations have highest GPAs on campus and do the most community service on campus. Rollins receives the praise from what the Greeks do. It's essential to have a house and to be on campus so that they can grow and operate. It is a recipe for disaster if they have to mix among other members of the community. They have different experiences than others on campus and so they can't live with other Rollins students. Boles asks why a chapter room is more special than a classroom or a lounge to meet in. Brandon Robinson replies that they need a private space. Boles asks why they can't use a closed door classroom. The students present jump in to say that it's a ritual, and that they need a ritual space.

- viii. Brown asks why Rollins wants to isolate people, especially freshmen, away from other people and into LLCs. Anne Hillo responds to Micki's comments, and says that she has met with various people to talk about this. There are inherent differences between people that have experienced Greek life and people who haven't, and outside people don't even have a perspective on this. Greek organizations are not simply social organizations, there are many facets to them. We need to be educated about what Greek organizations bring to the campus. We need to come up with our value system and figure out how or if each group fits into the value system.
- ix. Miller suggests that the SLC should have Scott Bitikofer come in to talk about ideas for building LLCs. We aren't talking about simple renovation with building a new hall. We are going to lose revenue unless we have another place to put people on campus. Where are we going to put people during renovation process? We need to have him come discuss the plans.
- x. Kistler raises two points. First, responding to Brown's points, she states that LLCs would not necessarily isolate freshmen, as students have suggested, because we could make a requirement of LLCs to be that one had to have at least sophomore status. Second, she suggested that we cannot accurately judge faculty interest in LLCs now, since many faculty are not even developing ideas or proposals since they know that there is no possibility for housing. Perhaps if more housing was available, more faculty would propose LLC ideas.
- xi. Boles states that the revision to the housing process can't happen this year, because it is too late to change student housing rules for this year. SLC's question becomes, do we want to recommend that competition become the new factor? And if so, how does this work? What happens this December if one or both of the two groups on probation doesn't meet their goals and does lose their housing? Meyer proposes that this housing process shouldn't be called competition, should be called living our values. It's doing what you are supposed to be doing. Hayner states that this would be fair, if this is how we frame the issue. Boles replies that he feels that trying to come up with the values is a larger issue and the specifics need to be addressed at this point. Meyer states that we should start with identifying what we don't value. Boles states that the SLC is open to further discussion about whether or not we want to continue along this line

of housing reform. Tomé responds that we need to separate Greeks from LLCs in this process.

- xii. A student, Jesse Morano, asks a final question, if it is that Greeks have to do something really bad to lose their house or something really good to keep their house? This is the question. Boles responds that if the Greeks do something really bad, they go on probation, they won't automatically lose their houses. Hayner points out that currently, there is no process in place for the language communities in Moberly house to create strategic plan, etc. to keep house. Paladino asks how many times groups are allowed to go on probation. Hater responds that they either get off probation or are back in good standing. It is a new process, so we don't know what happens if a group goes on probation multiple times.
- xiii. Boles brings up two final points. First, he is going to the PSC meeting on Thursday to request that the Dean of Student Affairs become a permanent, non-voting member of the committee and to discuss proposal that another staff member be added to the makeup of the committee and that the person come from Student Affairs. He asks if this is an amendment that is flexible or is it set? Meyer responds that the additional person is not an issue now, because meetings are open. Is the person voting? Boles replies that the position is a voting position. People in attendance ask how many voting staff positions there are on the committee. Boles proposes a friendly amendment that one of the existing staff members has to come from student affairs. Second, Boles raises the issue of an outdoor classroom on campus. He asks if the SLC is interested in pursuing this issue. Cummings suggests that the classroom should be amphitheatre style. Boles asks if he should invite Scott Bitikofer and Jeff Eisenbarth to attend the next SLC next meeting to talk about it? The committee responds that he should.

IV. Meeting Adjournment: Boles adjourns the meeting at 1:50 PM.