

## **2008-2009 Year-End Report of the University Council Committee on Campus and Community Life**

The University Council Committee on Campus and Community Life met four times as a full committee this year to address charges as follows:

1. Continue to work on the issue of graduate student housing with Facilities and Real Estate Services (FRES) to ensure the adequacy and affordability of these facilities to attract and retain the best and brightest graduate students to Penn.
2. Meet with Vice President for Community and Governmental Affairs Jeffrey Cooper and review the Economic Inclusion Plan.
3. Address general health issues for students and assess the effects of relocation of Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) to assure the quality of campus life.
4. Review and discuss the committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given highest priority for the committee's work in AY 2009-2010.

There was excellent attendance and engagement at committee meetings from all represented populations, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as staff. More than half of the committee's members were able to attend each of the meetings, which was an improvement from last year.

### **Activities in each charge area:**

1. Graduate student housing – The Chair and staffer consulted graduate students and faculty on the committee, as well as leaders in Facilities and Real Estate Services and Housing and Conference Services to learn about efforts and updates related to graduate housing. All parties noted ongoing dialogue and work in this area and felt that the committee's significant focus on this topic last year had shown benefit. Chair determined that absent major new developments, this topic would continue to be worked on by the parties involved as updates provided to the committee as appropriate in the future.
2. Economic Inclusion Plan and meeting with Vice President for Community and Governmental Affairs Jeffrey Cooper – The committee hosted Vice President Cooper who shared details of the University's extensive efforts toward economic inclusion, particularly related to procurement, employment, construction, and communications. VP Cooper described efforts to ensure effective use of local vendors and contractors, as well as programs to include minority and women-owned businesses. VP Cooper also

mentioned a pipeline program, used primarily by the Health System, to help largely high school students and other potential applicants with employment-related skills and training. Committee members appreciated the update on the University's efforts toward inclusion and inquired about participating in communications efforts.

3. Relocations of Student Health Service, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) – The committee met in the new location of Student Health Service at 3535 Market Street to tour the SHS facility first-hand. Committee members were impressed with the design and capacity of the new space, particularly compared to the more restrictive former facility in Penn Tower. The committee heard a presentation from Student Health Service Director Evelyn Wiener, who gave an overview of the Health Service's operations, which further emphasized additional benefits of the new space for patient privacy, provider workflow, and improved use of technology. Dr. Wiener also mentioned SHS' strong interest in preventative care and patient education, in coordination with other campus health and wellness partners.

The committee also met with Counseling and Psychological Services Director William Alexander, who advised the committee of the recent consolidation of CAPS into two floors of the Ann Taylor Loft Building at 36<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets, a move expected to provide more convenient centralized access to mental health services for students. Dr. Alexander provided an overview of CAPS' service and data on students served. In particular, Dr. Alexander noted CAPS' interest this year in outreach, both topical, as with eating, sleep, stress and other issues, and to potentially underserved populations, like international students. Dr. Alexander noted a significant increase in service to international students and credited staff, students, and campus centers for increased awareness to mental health. Thanks to a new triage system for students seeking appointments, Dr. Alexander also noted a reduction in student crisis situations. In response to earlier committee concerns about wait times at CAPS, Dr. Alexander mentioned ongoing efforts to see students more quickly and efficiently, including the new centralized location, but noted that wait times for initial appointments, while somewhat improved, remain of concern.

Committee heard descriptions of MERT services and inquired about next steps, which are being coordinated with Public Safety and other campus partners. Drs. Wiener and Alexander noted ongoing discussion about the role of MERT in campus health and wellness operations.

4. Review and discuss the committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given highest priority for the committee's work in AY 2009-2010.

Committee heard comments and suggestions from members about issues of concern to them and constituents across campus. The committee's recommendations are reflected below.

### **Other Committee Activities**

Additionally, the committee also considered other areas of campus and community life that interested members this year. These included public safety and student community involvement, particularly in difficult economic conditions.

1. Public Safety – Vice President for Public Safety Maureen Rush met with the committee and provided a comprehensive update on public safety activities. In particular, VP Rush highlighted efforts and significant accomplishments related to diversity, crime, crime prevention and education, lighting, and emergency preparedness. VP Rush also described the new Vertical Town Watch program, aimed to improve safety in off-campus, particularly high-rise residential spaces. VP Rush further detailed some of the challenges presented by the South Street Bridge closure and ongoing efforts to bolster security for the entire Penn community, particularly as eastern expansion efforts ensue. Committee members appreciated the detailed update and felt well-informed and engaged by Public Safety's service and educational efforts over the past year.
2. Student community involvement, particularly in difficult economic conditions – The committee met with Civic House Director David Grossman, who provided an overview of student community-based activity. These efforts included Civic House, the Netter Center, Fox Leadership, as well as individual schools and other programs. Dr. Grossman noted the wide range of activities in which students participate, in West Philadelphia, and throughout the city, nation, and the world. While Dr. Grossman suggested the economic conditions had not had a major impact on student volunteerism as yet, he noted the heightened interest of Civic House and other partners to support student needs, of all types, including transportation, scheduling, and other resources. Dr. Grossman also described the Civic Scholars program, now in its second year, and highlighted its effort to engage a special group of student civic leaders who engage in a dedicated program involving academic coursework and community service.

### **Priority for the committee's work in AY 2008-09**

1. Follow-up on recent committee areas of interest, including public safety, graduate housing, and provision of mental health services to ensure the highest quality University experience for students, faculty, and staff.

2. Continue to assess the impact of difficult economic conditions on campus and community life activities for students, faculty, and staff and other stakeholders. Assure that the University is taking appropriate steps to address evidenced needs.
3. Investigate particular needs of students with families, including child care, family housing, and other facility issues, to assure student needs are addressed.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Nichols  
Chair

**Chair:** Philip Nichols

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**Committee Members:** Joretha Bourjolly, Brenda Casper, J. Matthew Hartley, Aravind Joshi, Julie Lyzinski, Eileen Sullivan-Marx, Rosa Mathai, Brett Perlmutter, Shahedah Saalim, Henry Teune, Nikki Thorpe, Alec Webley.