

2207 - 2008 Year-End Report of the Committee on Campus and Community Life

Chair: Eileen Sullivan-Marx

Staffer: Matthew Waller

Members: Ben Alisuag , Joretha Bourjolly, Carine Carmy Shih-Wen (Wenny) Lin, Deborah Linebarger, Saurabh Madaan, Philip Nichols, Yvonne Paterson, Shahedah Saalim, Richard Shlansky-Goldberg, Larry Sipe, Lauren Swain, Henry Teune and Abigail Mason Woodworth,

The Committee on Campus and Community Life resumed its charge this year meeting four times as a full committee to address charges as follows

1. Meet with the Vice President for Public Safety to receive updates on public safety initiatives, facilitate efforts to inform students about issues related to public safety on and off campus, and promote dissemination of safety tips for undergraduate and graduate students and other members of the university community. Produce recommendations for a public safety communications plan.
2. Review and disseminate information regarding Penn's community relations strategy.
3. Make recommendations for improvement of graduate student housing both on and off campus and evaluate how they promote a more robust sense of student life among graduate students.
4. Examine the range of University and student-provided on-campus mental health programs available to students and establish recommendations to ensure access to and promote the use of these programs among undergraduate, graduate, professional students and other members of the university community.
5. Discuss updated response and preventative strategies of Penn to communicable diseases.

There was excellent attendance and engagement with undergraduate and particularly graduate students this year who were active in all of the committee's areas of responsibility. About one-third to half of the faculty and staff were able to attend on a regular basis, meeting schedules were a challenge but we supplemented the input from faculty with email communications.

Activities in each charge area:

1. Public Safety – VP for Public Safety, Maureen Rush met with the committee regarding updates on emergency notification, escort services, lighting and safety measures on campus, and camera monitoring. Chair, Eileen Sullivan-Marx also chaired the Public Safety Community Camera Monitoring Board and reported back updates to the full committee. Students and faculty had opportunity to probe specific issues particularly regarding increased crime in adjacent areas of Penn campus and were satisfied with VP Rush’s outreach to new Philadelphia Police Commissioner Ramsey and coordinated meetings with other university public safety officers in Philadelphia who met with Police Commissioner Ramsey regarding specific issues for safety on campuses. There was an expressed desire to ensure sustained presence of students on public safety committees and the student committees would take information back to students regarding services provided by Public Safety such as walk escort, transportation services, new late night center city bus service, housing checks, and emergency notification. There was a general sense from committee members that staff, faculty, and students feel relatively safe on campus.
2. Community Relations – VP Governmental Affairs office was contacted for update but a report to this committee was deferred until next year since there was an ongoing search for a VP for Governmental Affairs and there was no identified urgent business identified by the CCL committee.
3. Graduate Student Housing – There was considerable attention given to this topic each meeting. A subcommittee was considered but not established because the full committee felt that it was being adequately addressed. The CCL committee heard a presentation at the November meeting from GAPSA identifying a need to address: 1) availability of housing for graduate students affordable within their allotted stipend, 2) state of livability of current grad housing on campus, and 3) off campus housing that would meet students needs and be in safe locations and with landlords who have a relationship with the University. International students particularly need advise regarding time to locate new housing in a short period of time when they arrive on campus and to be given information so that they do not choose housing that is affordable but in unsafe locations. Following student presentations, VP for Facilities and Real Estate Services (FRES), Ed Datz, presented “Graduate Housing at Penn” on February 27, 2008. This was well attended by graduate student organization representatives and was well received and informative for the committee. GAPSA and FRES will continue to develop communication regarding flexibility of lease and timing of admissions, renovation schedules for current housing, development schedule for residences at 41st and Spruce, and opportunities for communicating housing options with incoming students. Students clearly identified that the preference is for on campus housing.
4. University Mental Health Programs – Students and faculty expressed concerns early in the year regarding long wait times at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), misinformation regarding availability of services among students and faculty, and that there was a concern that CAPS was underfunded and understaffed. On February 27, 2008, CAPS Director, Ilene Rosenstein, presented an update to the committee on expanded services and appointment times at CAPS, additional space which has become available on another floor

- allowing for private waiting areas for students. There was general kudos for a recent “Mental Health Camp” co sponsored by CAPS and several university organizations including the Asian Pacific Student Coalition who were present at the CCL meeting. More mental health camps throughout the year for prevention and outreach were recommended by the committee who were pleased to know of the improvements. Faculty, staff, and student organizations were encouraged by CCL to take the information on CAPS back to their constituencies.
5. Communicable diseases – No work was done in this area after review with committee members and UC leadership as it was not clear what the specific goal would be for this charge. However, the committee would like to hear from MERT in the future, the Medical Emergency Response Team on campus for an update.

Priority for the committee’s work in AY 2008-09

1. Need to continue work with graduate student housing and FRES to ensure adequacy of support to attract and retain best and brightest graduate students to Penn.
2. Set agenda with VP Governmental Affairs when that position is filled, e.g. review of Economic Inclusion Plan and support that this committee can provide.
3. Address general health issues for students and assess relocation of Student Health Services, CAPS, and MERT to assure quality campus life.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen M. Sullivan-Marx
Chair