

## **Student Welfare Committee Meeting Minutes: October 20, 2022**

**Present:** Suzanne Peters, Claudia Pina, Sarah Scheidel, Jennifer Tibbetts, Laura Burton, Kimberly Duby, Katherine McCarthy, Leslie Shor, Ashok Gurung, Leo Lachut, Bryanna Anderson, Kate Fuller, Peter Tribuzio and Tina McCarthy

**Absent:**

Meeting called to order (Time) 2:27PM via WebEx.

**1. Introductions:** A new member, Ashok Gurung was introduced as a new member of the committee.

Motion to approve September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting notes was made by Kimberly Duby and seconded by Jennifer Tibbetts.

**2. Review of Hartford Students, Storrs Resident Program:**

Leo Lachut presented the committee with data collected on students involved with the program. This data is available on Nexus.

Peter suggested that data be collected on how students are performing in Hartford classes versus Storrs classes.

**3. Review of Rise of Student Illnesses**

Tina McCarthy shared information regarding high rises in illnesses. COVID numbers are low. However, it has been busy at the alternate care site with a variety of respiratory illnesses. Flu clinics are running and offering flu vaccine. SHaW is encouraging students to get booster and flu shot. Overall, these illnesses are to expected during this time of the year.

**3. Review of Class Modality Changes**

Jennifer Tibbetts noted that that new definitions of class modalities were supposed to go live last fall. She offered to reach out to people regarding the new definitions and when they will be released.

Related to this, Kate Fuller noted that students are looking for private spaces to meet with professors and to conduct interviews.

Bryanna Anderson and Kimberly Duby mentioned that students are asking for private spaces for telehealth appointments.

Tina McCarthy suggested Telehealth Space options:

Cordial House

- A room can be reserved for up to 1 hour

- To make a reservation, the student can send an email to [urc@uconn.edu](mailto:urc@uconn.edu)

SHaW Arjona Room 441

- Can be utilized by students who are seeking services from SHaW team
- The room can be reserved in 1-hour increments
- To make a reservation, students can call 860-486-4705

SHaW Hilda May William Room 116

- The room can be reserved in 1-hour increments
- To make a reservation, students can call 860-486-2719

#### **4. Review of Regional Specific Student Welfare Concerns**

##### *Food Insecurity*

Leo stated Waterbury, Hartford and Stamford are working on the concerns. Suzanne Peters noted that there is a partnership with food share 2 days a week.

##### *Depleting Students First Fund:*

Kimberly Duby noted that she does not have a balance of the fund. If students ask about the fund, they can nominate themselves and the turnaround time is 4-6 weeks. In addition, if a student doesn't access all of the aid that is offered to them, they may not be eligible for a student 1<sup>st</sup> fund.

Suzanne Peters asked about the eligibility requirements for the fund. Students must be enrolled at UConn for fall or spring semesters. It's open to graduate students. They must have a financial hardship. There is a limit of \$500-\$1000.

Kimberly will find out if international students are eligible. The fund is composed of donations. Therefore, due to COVID, the fund has depleted and fundraising efforts have been impacted.

For more information visit:

<https://dos.uconn.edu/students-first-fund-nomination-form/>  
<https://bookbundle.program.uconn.edu>

Peter Tribuzio asked about the deadline for student to accept their loans. Suzanne clarified that students can accept their loans by calling the financial office. She emphasized that accepting loans is not technically a requirement. However, it is considered when students are looking for financial help through the Students First fund in order to determine which students need the funding more.

##### *HuskyBook Bundle (First Day Complete Program)*

Leo noted that the program will roll out Spring 2023. Students will have the ability to opt out of the program. There is a concern about students not opting out of the program even though they do not want to be part of the program.

Kate Fuller noted the communication for the program is poor. She mentioned that Michael Bradford also observed the poor communication. Therefore, Students need to be more

informed about the program. Currently, students are not aware about the program of the website.

Bryanna noted the CSD is not aware about the accommodation requests related to the program. As of now, Faculty determines print or digital book. The first option for CSD is digital either pdf or word document. When the questioned the program about the process of receiving a digital copy for accommodations, they were told the CSD would be responsible for helping students. Bryanna argued that the current program is not creating a universal and accessible design. She believes that this program is not inclusive or more accessible. She reached out to 75 school with a similar program and there were not positive responses.

Leo Lachut will arrange a guest speaker to discuss the program.

#### *DEI*

Leo was made aware of concerns regarding the new president's DEI initiatives. No new update.

### **5. New business regarding subgroups**

#### *ESL Students*

Bryanna noted that there has been an increase in the number of students registering at the CSD as English language learners.

#### *DUO Login*

Bryanna noted potential impact of DUO Students on exam proctoring. Students will need a phone to login however, students may not have a phone or a compatible phone.

#### *Exams offered outside of class time*

Leo mentioned that professors are offering exams for a limited number of hours and outside of class time. As a result, there is a small window.

Bryanna noted that this does help with students with accommodations.

Kimberly Duby mentioned that the DOS should be informed but the DOS is not aware about this issue.

Laura Burton mentioned that this issue may concern Scholastic Standards

#### *Waiving Health Insurance*

Leo mentioned that students are not waiving insurance who do not need it. First gen are not aware about waiving it

Kimberly Duby suggested collecting data on how many students are struggling with waiving the insurance and if it pertains to certain groups.

#### *Fall Break*

The committee discussed adding a day or a few days off in the fall semester. There is no holiday break from Labor Day to Thanksgiving. Several committee members express their support and presented ideas for adding a break in the fall semester.

Jennifer mentioned that it would be possible to have days off while meeting the 15-week requirement for a semester.

Katherine McCarthy shared her experience as a college student who had a whole week off in October. She acknowledged that it was beneficial for students' mental health.

Laura Burton suggested working with other committees after facing backlash and resistance from faculty when the committee dealt with adding reading days. Faculty was concerned about not having enough instructional days.

Tina and Laura noted that faculty and students have different definition of mental health

Suzanne mention taking a cost saving approach to appeal to the university community.

Kimberly suggested taking a mental health approach. She noted that having a day off allows students to take a break. As a result, students will know their college community does care about their health and well-being.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> via WebEx.