

Senate Student Welfare Committee  
Agenda  
January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Charge: This committee shall review the conditions that contribute to the academic success, personal development, physical and mental well-being of students, and available forms of financial aid. It may seek the opinion of the Senate on such matters and make recommendations.

Present:

Leo Lachut (Chair)  
Kara Aldonza  
Bryanna Anderson  
Thomas Bontly  
Elizabeth Bowling (Guest)  
Andrew Bush  
Kimberly Duby  
Kate Fuller  
Nathan Fuerst  
Arthur Galinat  
Erica Granoff  
Amanda Kilyk (Guest)  
Mona Lucas  
Katherine McCarthy  
Tina McCarthy  
Suzanne Peters  
Megan Petsa  
Sarah Scheidel  
Lorien Touponse  
Peter Tribuzio  
Fiona Vernal

1. Approve Minutes
  - a. Minutes approved unanimously
2. Old Business:
  - a. Update HTFD student/Storrs Residents tagged in Nexus
  - b. Fall break (return to discussion)
    - i. Leo Lachut summarized the issue and asked the committee whether this group would like to revisit this question, or if this group would recommend a specific/focused committee be put together to dig deeper into this issue.
    - ii. Discussion ensued and there was no official decision or recommendation made; the group will reconsider at another meeting
  - c. How will student experience be impacted by severe budget cuts (virtual town halls)
    - i. Are there specific questions that this group would like to submit in advance for the virtual town hall that is coming up on this issue?
    - ii. Discussion ensued around out admissions of state and international student enrollment vs in-state enrollment to affect revenue

- iii. A point was made that this committee is best suited to help guide students manage their anxiety during this process, rather than being in a position to offer clear information on what is going to happen. It was also mentioned that many students are unaware of the budget issue.
  - d. Regional Concerns
    - i. New positions and how they impact student success: plan to invite Dr. Starke to speak with this committee.
    - ii. DEI Concerns/Campus Climate: Nathan Fuerst reported that the Dean of Students is continuing to monitor campus climate; there is also a Metanoia scheduled for the Spring 2024 semester focused on promoting civil discourse and engaging productively on challenging topics. Nathan Fuerst also discussed the Biased Incidence Response reporting process and upcoming changes to that process to make the system more streamlined to better support students in these situations.
    - iii. University Communications, Timing – such as Dismissal notifications and fee bills: Fee bills were due on the 8<sup>th</sup> and Dismissal Notifications were sent out on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Leo Lachut will reach out to the committee focused on communications and get more information or invite someone to present to this group.
    - iv. Off campus housing for graduate students: a subcommittee of this group will be put together to focus on this issue.
    - v. Plan for student change out of Google: A comment was made that this transition makes it easier for international students (particularly those from China), where google is not accessible. Discussion also ensued regarding what the communication plan is around this change as well as the date (April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024).
- 3. New Business:
  - a. MLK Holiday vs day before classes conflict: Students have raised concerns that they cannot access resources the day before the semester starts. The question was raised whether this committee would like to look at this issue. Nathan Fuerst said he will follow up with the Provost.
  - b. Weather response to Tuesday
  - c. One stop on hold 25 minutes (one stop advising): Katherine McCarthy reported - the office has been open for 12 days and has been extremely busy. It has also been opened during a very busy time of the year/semester for advising and will be hiring more student workers to help handle the caseload coming in. She confirmed that once the office has settled, they will follow up with students utilizing these services to solicit feedback for more fine tuning.
  - d. Book Bundle Program – Spring 2024: Fiona Vernal shared slides and reported that there was an increase in adoption rates for this program from last Spring to this semester. She added that the primary challenge has been getting faculty to abide by the deadlines to submit course materials so that bundles can be appropriately compiled.
  - e. Incomplete – Bryanna Anderson raised concerns around granting incompletes, policy around incomplete's. She shared that it's a complex process and she has seen an increase in incomplete's granted. Discussion also ensued regarding reporting of academic engagement.
    - i. Quoted from a recent communication: Effective as of Spring 2024, when submitting final grades for students with non-passing grades, instructors will be required to submit the date of last academic engagement. The collection of this

information supports institutional compliance with federal financial aid regulations. Failure to provide this information may result in negative financial consequences for students. Please remember that you can take attendance in classes where feasible.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.