

Staff Advisory Committee Meeting

May 13, 2008

11:30am – 1:30pm – Dining Rooms 8&9

Present: Doreen Burgers, Ruth Crane, Ron Dunleavy, Pam DeSimone, Heather Dominey, Jeff Fitton, Deborah Healey, Walter Hunter, Angel Hilliard, Karen Leonard (Chair), Nancy Magers, Lori Maguire, Maritza Marti, Beth Murphy, Chris O'Neil, Joe Sarno, Lisa Sheehan, Lea Snyder, Kristen Soule, Alfred Tente, Steve Tompkins, Amy Umstadter, Courtney Wuethrich

Absent: Sarah Peri

Announcements

Karen welcomed group and thanked all the volunteers who participated in Worker Appreciation Day on May 7th. There were volunteer tables on the Green and in the Ratty. The event was very successful, with a lot of faculty support. Campus Life purchased 1500 carnations and had approximately 300 left over. Ron suggested better signage for next year (making it clear that the carnations are free to take). Karen will target next year's Morning Mails to include both students and faculty. Karen advised that next year's SAC chair contact Campus Life early in the semester.

Karen asked for motion to pass the minutes from the 4/29 meeting. Amy made the motion to pass the minutes, and it was seconded by Doreen.

Karen reported on SAC's budget for events. She requested funding from the President's Office for upcoming events such as Spooky Skate in October and SAC's 10-yr anniversary party in August. Karen invited President Simmons to the anniversary party.

Angel updated SAC members on Staff Development Day, scheduled this year for Wednesday, June 4th. There will be 80 seminars offered in 4 categories: About Brown & Beyond, Faculty Research, Personal Growth and Professional Development.

Subcommittee Reports

Pam DeSimone – Staff Participation Subcommittee

SPS is recruiting staff to fill 3 openings on 2 committees: 2 openings on the Human Resources Advisory Board (HRAB) and 1 opening on the Campus Planning Advisory Board (CPAB). SPS has 19 applications and will recommend 3-4 names.

SPS will also send out a survey to current and past members sitting on University committees to ask for feedback on their experience; the survey may be put on SAC's website or it may be sent as a targeted email. There was a discussion about the staff term limit on the URC. Currently the URC term limit for staff is 2 years, but for faculty/students it's 3 years. Walter suggested SAC should discuss the term amount difference with the new advisor.

Jeff Fitton – Events Subcommittee

Events is planning upcoming events including the Staff Development Day community service drives to benefit Crossroads Rhode Island and the RI Community Food Bank. Jeff received information about a Bookstore diaper drive collection. This will be considered for a future event and will be coordinated with the Bookstore.

Lea Snyder – Outreach & Communications Subcommittee

O&C completed the SAC taglines project and sent them to SAC members on the listserv.

Rebuilding Together's camp project has been posted to SAC's website.

Guest Presenter: Roger Nozaki, Howard Swearer Center for Public Service

Karen introduced Roger Nozaki, the Director of the Howard Swearer Center for Public Service. Roger has been affiliated with the Center since its founding in 1988. Inspired by Howard Swearer, Brown made a permanent center that connects students' community work to their undergraduate coursework under the Dean of the College. The focus of the Center is to 1) bring together student engagement and learning, and 2) face the challenges in Providence and RI. Roger also reviewed the Swearer Center's community and fellowship programs and advising programs.

He explained that, in 2005, The Swearer Center underwent an intensive review and planning and engaged 150 stakeholders in the process. They defined their mission:

- 1) address inequalities
- 2) create share apply knowledge, and
- 3) educate and prepare students

This process resulted in a shift from programs to strategies. The Center focused on developing a framework to engage faculty, identifying strategies and resources for community impact, and defining clear goals for student learning and growth. This narrowed focus enabled the Center to provide greater depth. The following priorities were identified:

Priority #1 - Intellectual development at Brown University

Priority #2 - Faculty engagement

Priority #3 - Community impact strategies

Roger answered the following questions:

Q: Did Howard Swearer champion the public service part of Brown's mission?

A: Roger indicated he wasn't sure but mentioned that Howard Swearer's writings connect the University with broader world; he would often talk about sense of community and civility on campus.

Q: How can we better engage staff in community service projects so that they serve as examples for students?

A: The Swearer Center will sit down and discuss projects with some existing partners (like the William D'Abate Elementary School). They currently don't have the capacity to reach out to grad students and staff; their focus is on the undergraduate mission and community strategies.

Q: Could the Swearer Center provide a list of current volunteer opportunities for staff? Could the Swearer Center add these staff resources to its website?

A: Roger said he will give some thought to what programs are most appropriate for staff volunteers, but cautioned that there may be some logistical challenges for staff to become involved.

Q: Who is the audience for Swearer Bulletin?

A: Whoever signs up! Roger urged SAC members to sign up for this list on the Swearer Center website. SAC could send a morning mail to staff encouraging others to sign up; Roger will send Karen the information.

Q: Brown staff want volunteer opportunities; one SAC member mentioned that some colleges and universities have service sabbatical programs for staff.

A: Roger suggested connecting to student service organizations outside of the Swearer Center for one-time projects rather than ongoing projects throughout the year. These student organizations are often easier entry points for those who want to do community work, but don't want a long-term commitment.

Q: What has been your most successful project to date?

A: The College Advising Corps has had the biggest impact. The program's goal is to improve the college-going culture of the school and consists of working with high school students to apply and get in to college. A SAC member suggested tapping into grad students to work with college advising corps counselors.

Q: Is there an assessment at the end of a student's work at the Swearer Center?

A: Each semester, the Swearer Center surveys students to get soft reporting data. This has been helpful in distinguishing strengths and weaknesses, but more work needs to be done in the assessment area.

Q: How do students become introduced to The Swearer Center?

A: Roger mentioned CARN: the Community Action Resource Network. This event is held twice each semester and a range of community organizations are invited; between 300-400 students attend. Staff are more than welcome to attend the events.

Advisor's Report – Walter Hunter

Joe spoke with Drew Murphy regarding retiree benefits and the difference between RI and MA residents in terms of health care benefits. Joe noted that MA retirees currently are not eligible for the Blue Cross/Blue Chip Advantage Plan and that the Benefits Office is considering options to address this point. SAC will invite Drew to future SAC meeting to discuss this issue as well as other benefits questions prepared in advance by SAC. Karen will send an email to the SAC listserv soliciting questions.

Staff Concerns

There was a staff concern regarding 360 degree feedback of supervisors. Amy suggested better education on the use of the current performance evaluation form under leadership/ supervision section. Currently, there is no requirement to do 360 degree feedback at Brown. Joe will discuss this matter with Wendy McRae-Owoeye, Director of Employee Relations and Performance Development.

There was a staff concern regarding the customer service given by Altus Benefit Administrators. Once specifics are forwarded to Joe, he will discuss the matter with Drew Murphy.

There was a staff concern regarding the EEP benefit - specifically the confusion about why the IRS allows \$5000 for courses and Brown allows a \$2500 benefit. Joe will discuss this with Michele Wise in the Benefits Office.

There was a staff concern suggesting the use of an online anonymous suggestion box. There was a lengthy discussion about maintaining anonymity with this type of feedback tool. Nancy mentioned that this could be set up technically but questioned how it would be administered. Walter mentioned that there is already a mechanism for suggestions and staff concerns at SAC meetings. To resolve this issue, Ruth suggested that O & C make staff aware of how to voice concerns through the SAC website.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25pm.