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Student Affairs minutes 02/13/2007

Student Affairs Committee

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UMM Student Services Committee
Minutes – February 13, 2007

Present: Corey Phelps, Dave Roberts, LeAnn Hedquist, Brittany Jablonski, Joe Alia, Claire Lundgren, David Swenson, Gail Hockert, Sara Haugen, Mary Zosel, Adam Yust

Not Present: Michael Eble, Carla Riley, Adam Olson

Guest: Sandy Olson-Loy

I. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of 01/30/07 were approved as written.

II. Student Organization Constitutions

A. Hope Beyond Borders

MOTION: (Gail, LeAnn) To approve the Hope Beyond Borders constitution.

VOTE: (7-0-0)

III. Old Business

Dave Swenson reported that the Men's Club Swimming at UMM accepted the changes suggested by SSC, so the organization has been approved as per the motion at the January 30, 2007 meeting.

V. New Business

A. Policy on Student Organization Advisors

The issue of whether or not student organizations should be required to have UMM faculty or staff advisors was again a frequent topic of conversation on campus after an offending article was published in the University Register. Dave Swenson, with volunteer assistance from Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, drafted a policy on student organization advisors for SSC review.

Committee members agreed with policy item #1, requiring advisors for organizations receiving annual funding through the Student Service Fee, and item #2, requiring an advisor for organizations with significant resources and assets. Members wondered about item #3, requiring advisors for organizations that could create significant liability for the University. Sandy Olson-Loy recommended running the policy by Tracy Smith of the U General Counsel for her advice regarding item #3 and the implications of UMM acknowledging significant liability.

Swenson said the Crookston and Twin Cities campuses were classifying student organizations into different categories to address some of these issues. This was an option that UMM may need to consider. Swenson suggested that the SSC focus for now on a policy that includes items 1 and 2. Item 3 would be developed over time with advice from U General Counsel and perhaps with the development of a classification system.

A committee member expressed concern that a rush to implement a new student organization policy may give the University Register the impressions we don't trust them. They acknowledged and apologized for the poor decisions in publishing the offensive article. A rush to implement a new policy may give the impression that their acceptance of responsibility and their apology was not acceptable. Swenson noted UMM needs to get out of the response mode in situations such as this. A policy in place would raise expectations for student organizations.

It was also noted that the campus atmosphere currently presents an opportunity to be proactive on this issue. A similar policy was proposed after a similar situation a few years ago. There was significant campus support for a policy, evidenced by a petition that organizations would be required to have an advisor, but time passed and the policy proposal was eventually defeated in Campus Assembly.

Swenson will seek input from Tracy Smith and will send the SSC a revised version of the policy draft for review at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 AM

Submitted by Melody Veenendaal