

Senate Committee on Student Affairs
Minutes
December 9, 2008

The following committee members were present: Azad Ali, Terry Appolonia, Tracey Cekada, Frank Condino, Rhonda Luckey, Germaine McArdle, Heather Powers, Terry Rittenberger

The following committee members were excused: Ray Beisel, Kim Desmond, Reena Dube, Linda Hall, Dennis Hulings, Jack Julian, Sue Rieg

The following committee member was absent: Jill Johnson-Hilty

Chairperson Rieg was absent due to illness. The meeting was called to order by the Secretary, Senator Heather Powers at 3:38 p.m.

As we had guest presenters, the committee agreed to move directly to New Business.

Old Business

- Senator Terry Appolonia introduced Betsy Sarneso and a panel of IUP students representing the Greek leadership on campus. He invited the students to talk with us about the deferred rush proposal, in hopes of helping the Senate vote on this issue in the Spring semester.

New Business

- Senator Appolonia introduced the Proposed Policy Revision to the University Statement of Relationship of General Fraternities and Sororities:
 - Section VII. Responsibility of the Chapter
 - Existing Language: Item 10. Initiating into associate/new membership only full-time students who demonstrate a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00, if an IUP GPA has been established.
 - Proposed Language: Item 10. Initiating into associate/new membership only full-time students who demonstrate a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.25 and who have successfully completed twelve credit hours of academic study.
- Senator Appolonia then reviewed some of the statistics on graduation rates for Greek students with the visiting student panel. The committee reviewed this information during the Oct. 14 meeting.
- Betsy Sarneso pointed out that all national Greek organizations represented on the IUP campus have higher GPA requirements than 2.0 (averaging 2.3 for fraternities, 2.5 for sororities).
- With apologies to the student panelists, I am simply going to refer to them each as “student.” Their names were not provided.
 - Students then asked questions.
 - Q: Do we have all-IUP GPA’s for comparison?
 - Appolonia: We will have that information before taking this proposal to the Senate.
 - Q: Can we compare Greeks to athletes? Remember that athletes have required study hall, and other support.
 - Appolonia: Maybe Greeks could get similar support systems in place.
 - A suggestion of a Fall Meet & Greet system was not popular with the students. Fraternities tend to get no one coming at these events, small sororities feel edged out by the larger sororities who can have “200 girls at their table, when we only have 24 girls total.”
 - A student pointed out that perhaps quality is better than quantity. Maybe having fewer, but better, members is preferable.
 - Another student pointed out that while this is true, the workload remains the same. If Fall numbers are very low then the workload will be prohibitive for the members of smaller sororities.
 - A student pointed out that a one semester delay will give Greeks time to see how pledges actually perform in college, as opposed to how they say they will perform.
 - It was noted that the IUP Greek system is also considering a move to a formal rush/bid system at this time.
 - An informal rush structure basically means that all of the Fall semester is a “get-to-know-you” period.
 - Students feel that in the new system more leadership would be necessary from the Greek council.
 - For example, chapters could mentor their “wish-list” candidates to ensure they get the required GPA.

- Students requested a transition year. It was pointed out that this might just lead to more confusion, and no less work in the long run. Other suggestions for managing the transition to a new system were: a mid-way structure as a transition option and simply making the change but with a big PR “head’s up” beforehand.
 - Senator Appolonia acknowledged that however the change occurs, there will be significant growing pains for the Greek system.
 - A final concern was voiced by several students: the fear that deferring rush a semester gives negative Greek stereotype gossip time to “settle in,” and might deter students who came to college with a more open mind.
- The minutes of the October 14, 2008 meeting were approved (Appolonia/Ali).
 - GSA
 - The GSA hopes to set up an information station near the Java City in the library to recruit new members.

Student Government Association President's Report

- SGA: no representative was at the meeting.

Vice President 's Report

- From Senator Luckey
 - The IUP-Punxsutawney’s Student Activities Board worked with Toys for Tots on a toy drive.
 - Representatives of a Veterans Outreach program at St. Thomas More University Parish met with representatives from IUP to talk about creating a Veterans Support group on campus.
 - \$20,000 in mini-grants have been granted this year for living-learning initiatives. Find more information at: <http://www.iup.edu/newsItem.aspx?id=26319>
 - The pilot Winter Session was quite successful. 840 students registered in 29 undergraduate and 2 graduate courses. 633 students had 3-credit loads, the maximum load was 6 credits. The courses were vetted through the University-Wide Curriculum Committee. Student athletes benefitted from this opportunity to get their required credits.
 - Samantha Goettman (President’s Student Athletic Advisory Council) told us about “Make A Difference Day.” Student-athletes came in on a Saturday and did quizzes on [Freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com). They earned 3,088,000 grains of rice and fed 2,700 children.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. (Ali/Appolonia)

Respectfully submitted by Senator Heather Powers, Committee Secretary