

Student Success Council Meeting

November 7, 2003

Attending: Alison Anderson, Philip Bailey, Olga Berdial, Marty Bragg, Navjit Brar, Amanda Carlson, David Conn (co-chair), Donna Davis, Robert Detweiler, Eddie Dominguez, Tiffani Hamilton, David Hannings, Kimi Ikeda, George Lewis, Valene Mathews (recording), Kent Morrison, Cornel Morton (co-chair), Markel Quarles, Brian Barnes (for Jerry Hanley), Carole Schaffer, Mary Whiteford, Jean Williams

October 24 meeting minutes approved by the council.

1. Announcements

David Conn distributed to the council the following memorandums addressed to the Provost and the University Registration and Scheduling Committee, respectively:

- a. Endorsement of 25//35 Program
- b. Cal Poly's Course Registration System

David Conn explained that neither of the two memos had yet been delivered, and asked the Council to review and give input prior to their distribution. David informed the Council that the issue of registration should be taken up by the University Registration and Scheduling Committee. This committee is charged by the University to consider all matters to do with registration and scheduling. Last year's chair (who had suggested a separate taskforce to address the broader issues) has resigned from this position and a new chair has not as yet been appointed. David expects the committee to have a new chair in place sometime this coming week. David and Cornel will notify the Council of the Registration and Scheduling Committee's response.

David Conn distributed a preliminary analysis of the responses received for the "In Charge for a Day" survey that had been sent to the members of Advisnet as well as the department administrative assistants. The survey produced a number of ideas, some new and others that have been around for awhile. David explained that he had asked the respondents to place their ideas in order of priority, which will be examined in the next step of the analysis. David had given his personal assurance to the respondents that he would do his best to ensure that feasible suggestions are given careful consideration.

Cornel Morton announced that he had met with both Carol Pendergast and Mary Sommerville within the Library regarding how the Library would like to partner with the Student Success Council and ASI to share ideas and information on the Library's services and how they can assist students. Navjit Brar will conduct a presentation with the help of Carol and Mary at the next Council meeting on December 3rd. The meeting will be held in the Library (35) in room 111h at 4:00pm.

David Conn announced that, due to conflicting schedules, the team members attending the Student Success Conference were not going to be able to meet prior to the conference, but that he and Cornel would be communicating with them by email in order to ensure broad coverage of the various sessions. David invited Council members who were not attending the conference to inform either himself or Cornel of those topics about which they would like the team to gather information. If the Council is curious about what the other CSUs are doing in relation to some of the issues that we are facing here, the sharing of ideas is precisely the purpose of the conference.

The following themes will be addressed at the Student Success Conference:

- Academic Discipline Road Maps and Master Schedules
- Road Maps, Transfers, and Regional Articulation
- Facilitating Transfer: Statewide Efforts
- Degree Audits and Advising
- The First-Year Experience
- Innovative Teaching and Learning Models
- Experiences Outside the Classroom
- Academic Policies and Research

Alcohol Use on Campus

Martin Bragg distributed a Pop Quiz of 15 questions from the Core Survey on alcohol use, and asked Council members to note down whether they believed that San Luis Obispo was above or below the national average in answers to the items addressed. The study was based on a random stratified sample of 600 Cal Poly students. Martin distributed the answers actually received and pointed out that those Council members who live in San Luis Obispo might be interested in the projected total number of Cal Poly students (2,304) thought to have had trouble with the police or campus authorities. Martin stated that the percentages are fairly accurate. Martin also drew attention to the 6,426 students thought to have driven under the influence at least once during the year, with many of the students driving under the influence more than once.

40% of the respondents had drunk until they had memory loss. This is a disturbing statistic. The survey revealed that heavy drinking (5 or more drinks in one sitting, 3 or more times in the past 2 weeks) was at almost 50% (49.8%). Martin stated that they had conducted the survey in February, in order to avoid events such as Mardi Gras and the Super Bowl. 30% of the students had performed poorly on a test or important project due to drinking. Martin used the data to compare GPA and mean drinks per week/median drinks per week, and demonstrated how drinking has a negative effect on students' performance.

Most of the ratings at Cal Poly are above the national average. Martin told the Council that he would give the most parsimonious explanation for this: white males drink the most. Our demographics -- having a higher percentage of men than women as well as a fairly non-diverse population -- provide a complete explanation as to why the numbers are above average. This doesn't mean that our drinking problem isn't serious, or more serious than most schools, because in the community we see all these behaviors manifest themselves.

The Council has mainly focused on low hanging fruit, but Martin expressed that alcohol use on campus is a very difficult and challenging problem. Martin displayed the alcohol ads from the Mustang Daily and pointed out the most distressing item titled "On the Rocks" which is a public service and advertises happy hours seven days a week. There is no charge to the bars for that listing. Martin told the Council that alcohol use is deep within the culture at Cal Poly and that alcohol is fundamentally part of the lives of many students on campus.

Martin said that, according to the data, freshman are drinking prior to coming to Cal Poly. The data also reveal that freshman and sophomores are drinking more than juniors and seniors, although Martin did not believe that the difference is statistically significant. There has been a statistically significant increase in drinking among undergraduate men.

Martin stated that in the last year, Cal Poly has had a number of alcohol-related incidents that were very serious and that the blood alcohol levels were potentially fatal. Carole Schaffer stated that she has dealt with two student situations this academic year that involved blood alcohol levels above .38. One of the students was in a coma for two days.

Philip Bailey stated that during WOW week and "Academic Day" he has asked the WOW counselors to discuss with the new incoming students what would be the one thing that could affect their academic careers in a negative way. Alcohol was not mentioned. Phil said that not enough people view the alcohol problem seriously. The advantage of the 25/35 program in this case would be that if the faculty members were willing to participate in discussing alcohol use in their classrooms, it would accomplish student success and would be effective in addressing the alcohol use problem on campus. Faculty may think that 10-15 minutes per week might be too long of a time for discussion not relevant to their subject, but this is very important and one of the greatest determinants of student success is having a friend on the faculty. Phil stated that many of the faculty do not know the statistics, and neither do the students.

Robert Detweiler suggested that, because students respect faculty, the Council might consider providing the faculty with this type of information and attempt to get the faculty to help us with this issue. Martin said that he is working on an information booklet for the faculty and that by next fall it will be ready to distribute. Kimi Ikeda suggested that we distribute something similar to the survey that is brief but is real information that the students can relate to.

Philip Bailey said that he would get the College of Science and Mathematics faculty together on a Tuesday at 11:00am to take the POP Quiz. Phil said he thinks the faculty would be shocked by the statistics. Donna Davis mentioned that there is an increasing problem at the high school level and that anything we can do that promotes prevention for freshmen coming in to Cal Poly would be helpful. Martin stated that the most important thing that can be done is for the faculty to become messengers. Most students have a faculty member that they like and

respect. It is important that the faculty speak about alcohol use, and disapprove of use in excess. All too often we are reluctant to be judgmental, but to the extent that the faculty let their feelings and expectations be known about this, the message will get through -- more so with faculty than just the Health Center Director or the Vice President of Student Affairs.

Tammi Hamilton stated that professors play a vital role of getting the information to the students, but her experiences in some instances have been counterproductive. In the classroom, some professors joke about drinking and make statements about squeezing in study time between going to the bars. Tammi said that some of her friends have talked about professors themselves drinking or being under the influence.

Philip Bailey stated that he agrees with Tammi's comments. The faculty are no different from any other group; they have their good and bad habits. Philip compared it to jokes about commencement: when we joke about seeing our students at commencement in 5, 6 or 7 years, it isn't funny. We should stop joking about the time it takes to graduate, and the faculty should not joke about alcohol abuse, either. Philip stated that he feels if the faculty saw these statistics, they would not joke about them and would do what they could to help prevent students from abusing alcohol.

Robert Detweiler stated that alcohol use affects academic performance. Bob suggested that Housing, the Deans and Department Chairs, Academic Senate, and ASI should get together routinely, as well as the students through the student clubs and the advisors of those clubs, to work on getting through a consistent message on the dangers of alcohol abuse. The message should not be "don't drink", but should be "drink responsibly". It would be foolish to expect our students not to drink. If we can give them common sense messages on how to avoid sexual assault by thinking ahead and arranging for transportation home, then this too would be something to which the students could be receptive. The problem in the last two to three years is that students have been hearing this from Student Affairs, but not from the people they respect most, who are the faculty.

Jean Williams suggested that in addition to the wide ranging message, if the data reflects trends, we could target the messages based on the data.

Martin said that there are fewer Friday classes, and combined with the Thursday night Farmer's Market, it is even more difficult to combat alcohol abuse, because students have a three day weekend every week.

George Lewis suggested that we look at what measures other campuses are taking that have been successful. George stated that we need more forceful messages from our leadership.

It is planned to send an electronic birthday card to each student turning 21, reminding them to not overindulge and to have a safe birthday.

David reminded the Council that the next meeting will focus on Library Services and their contribution to Student Success.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2003, in the Library, room 111h at 4:00pm.