

Student Life Committee Report 2017-18

The Student Life Committee (SLC) had a rebuilding year of sorts. Although not new to student life at the University, the SLC chair was a first time Faculty Senator and so much of the year was devoted to exploring and building for the following year. Several immediate queries to the committee were also handled. Comments below reflect the SLC charges for the 2017-18 academic year.

- 1) Wellness continued to be a focus for the Vanderbilt community. The report from the Chancellor's Strategic Planning Committee on Mental Health and Wellbeing came out this year. The SLC learned about resources existing in the Vanderbilt student community and learned from administrators and others about the shift from the PCC to the UCC and what that would mean for students. The SLC also heard from the director of the Center for Student Wellbeing about measured outcomes from the Center. All of these areas seem to be in progress.
- 2) The SLC discussed that secondary to the nature of the Faculty Senate, faculty members on the SLC were representing schools in disproportion to the distribution of students within those schools and many members were not necessarily in touch with the student experience outside of their School. As such, *ex officio* members of the committee were established who could help orient and provide reference at the committee level. These included Dean of Students Mark Bandas, and Dean of the Martha Rivers Ingram Commons Vanessa Beasley.
- 3) The annual update by leaders of Greek Life was presented to the SLC in the late spring of 2018. This report was viewed in the context of the report presented by the prior Task Force on Greek Life. It was a very positive report, and SLC members felt that much progress had been made in regards to the recommendations from the task force. Continued recommendations from the SLC at this report were that fraternities and sororities could consider opening more programming, particularly academic programming, up to the broader Vanderbilt community, which would perhaps increase and encourage faculty participation and engagement. There was also a specific suggestion that next year the report occur earlier in the academic year rather than at the end.
- 4) The SLC worked to explore the effect of Greek Life on undergraduate student life from the perspective of independent students. Discussions included supporting and bolstering academic experiences for everyone. Obviously, Opportunity Vanderbilt and Experience Vanderbilt have made immense inroads in this area. We also discussed potential future recommendations and expansion options including increasing networking, increasing professional organization involvement, alumni involvement and travel assistance for those who may not have those opportunities otherwise.
- 5) The SLC worked over the course of the year to understand opportunities that may exist within graduate and professional schools. The SLC chair met with leaders in the Graduate School, the School of Nursing, and the School of Medicine. Opportunities at this point include centralizing communication and advertising opportunities for under-represented groups, professional and social, as in some schools there may be smaller numbers of individuals but much larger numbers and opportunities if the University as a whole is considered. This work will be continued into the 2018-19 academic year.
- 6) In conjunction with increasing professional opportunities, the SLC had a presentation during the year from Kate Brooks, Director of the Career Center, and learned about the changing

opportunities for students there. The SLC also learned that scholarships and fellowships had also been folded into the Career Center, already with significant outcomes and successes. As one of the charges of the SLC was to explore opportunities afforded to all students, this was important.

- 7) The SLC worked to strengthen the relationship with the Vanderbilt Student Government (VSG) and kept in contact with VSG Speaker of the Senate, Molly Gupta, about parallel concerns. Those included the mental health initiatives, inclusivity (including socio-economic inclusivity), and student resources for sexual assault. SLC Chair Terhune was a speaker at a VSG meeting and talked about the role of the Faculty Senate. The VSG expressed that it would like to work more closely with the Faculty Senate in the future, and this relationship will continue.
- 8) The SLC chair also met with other campus representatives in order to learn about student needs—these included Mark Bandas, Vanessa Beasley (now *ex officio* members as above), Melissa Thomas-Hunt, Vice-Provost for Inclusive Excellence, and Dr. Tina Smith, interim Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Many of these areas of focus will continue into the 2018-19 academic year for the Student Life Committee. SLC Chair Terhune has used the summer to continue conversations with administrators about opportunities where the Faculty Senate can assist. One specific suggestion for focus in the following year was to work to increase faculty education and awareness around EAD, Title IX, and available Student Services.