

Student Life Committee  
Vanderbilt University Senate  
Report for Academic Year 2015-2016

**Committee Members:**

David Cliffler, chair, A&S (2017)  
Rolanda Johnson, ex officio [Executive Committee Liaison]  
Alyssa Hasty, Medicine (2016)  
Michael Slayton, Blair (2016)  
Edward Wright-Rios, A&S (2016)  
Brian Bachmann, A&S (2017)  
Tony Brown, A&S (2017)  
Nicole McCoin, Medicine (2017)  
Debbie Rowe, Peabody (2018)  
Sarah Rohde, Medicine (2018)

**Meetings of the Student Life Committee**

The Student Life Committee met four times in the Fall Semester (Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec), and officially once in the spring semester in early February. The March/April committee meetings ended up pre-empted by the special meetings of the Senate to address the Greek Life Task Force Report. Given the lateness in the spring semester of the special Senate meeting with concerned Greek Life student leadership, the SLC did not have time to meet to address the student comments, but the SLC chair met with the Greek Life Task Force Chair, Prof. Weintraub to work out the details for the future monitoring of progress by the SLC. Attendance at all committee meetings was about 50%.

The September meeting outlined the work of the committee for the year in terms of the initial charges. The October meeting focused on a discussion on the Student Alcohol and Drug Use Report as well as Student Life needs in terms of a new wellness plan and expansion of the PCC. The November meeting continued the discussion on these two areas. Final discussions of these two topics and the preliminary discussions of the Greek Life Task Force occurred in December, with the spring meeting entirely focused on the Greek Life recommendations.

**1. Initial Charges for 2015-16:**

**Student alcohol and drug use**

**Goals:** Follow up on the work of the 2011-13 Senate taskforce that looked at the issue of student alcohol and drug use in light of the 2014-2015 annual report expected by the end of September. Contact person is G.L. Black.

**Results:** The general reaction of the committee to the report is that the faculty as a whole is woefully unaware of the extent and nature of alcohol and drug use on campus. Discussions about how to better inform the faculty given the confidential nature of the report did not lead to any satisfactory answers other than the SLC needs to continue to monitor this annual report and search for ways to help by devoting at least one meeting to discussion of ideas for faculty dissemination, confidentiality, and reduction of incidents.

**2. Continue to monitor Greek Life taskforce**

**Goals:** Reach out to the task force to review their report expected by the end of September. Work with the task force as needed to bring this matter to a close. Develop campus-wide communication plan regarding report, results, findings, and recommendations. David Weintraub is point person.

**Results:** The SLC agreed to the recommendation of the Greek Life Task Force to monitor the progress of the Task Force as modified by the Greek student leadership specifically that: "The students recommended that Greek leadership provide annual, semesterly, or quarterly Greek Life updates to applicable Faculty Senate subcommittee." The annual reporting by the students and Office of Greek Life to the Senate Student Life committee as a key component of faculty and Senate engagement with Greek Life. Both the SLC and Greek Life chairs embrace the student leaders' recommendation that the students themselves provide an annual update to the Student Affairs Committee, as the burden of work is actually on the students, not the senate committee.

### **3. Graduate education study group**

**Goals:** Facilitate faculty engagement with Graduate Education Study Group. Point persons are Vikki Greene and John Geer. Develop campus-wide communication plan. In particular, facilitate stakeholder engagement; publicize as necessary. This engagement process is referred to as the Graduate Education Forums.

**Results:** The GESG report was the start of significant changes in graduate education, including a new dean and some SLC members, including the chair, attended one or more forums, the process of reviewing how these changes will come about is left to future SLC committees.

### **4. First year student experience**

**Goals:** Reach out to the new Dean of the Commons to learn about her vision for the first year students in her new role.

**Results:** The new Dean had definite plans to try to improve the Commons, and the SLC decided in its first meeting to give the new leadership on the Commons time to affect changes, so this charge was tabled for the future.

### **5. Student life needs**

**Goals:** Increase awareness of mental health issues when considering all aspects of student life. In particular, consider student life needs in the context of both wellness and mental/physical health needs to provide a consistent framework for thinking about student life. This framework should embrace undergraduate students and graduate students. Cathy Fuchs, MD in the Psychological Counseling Center is contact.

**Results:** After a meeting between the chair and Cathy Fuchs in September, discussions of the needed expansion of the mental health awareness and wellness programs filled much of the early SLC meetings. Likewise, the administration made key investments in the creation of new wellness program, including renovation of new space and hiring new staff in the PCC to reflect better the diversity of the students. As a community, the administration decisions to keep faculty unaware of major events involving the student affairs in the fall was lamented, and these events were better handled by the administration in the spring.