Tuesday December 7, 2010

SGA Senate Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order 7:00 pm

II. Roll Call
   A. Absent: Shannon O’Brien, Caitlin Jordan, Alex von Mering, Jasmine Yaas Setoodenhia, Louisa Loring, Keji Fatona, Kim Fong, Glendean Hamilton, Cait Kirby, Wendy Liu, Elisabeth Wroth, Natalya Devaeva, Abiola Ahow, Katy Swartz, Nahee Kwak
   B. Quorum Met

III. Green Team
   A. Specific subcommittee within the Green Team specifically concerned with waste and consumption at Smith
   B. Focusing on paper waste from mailboxes – a lot of it is unnecessary, not the most effective means of communicating with students
   C. Need to figure out a sustainable and effective way to communicate with students
   D. Interested in doing a survey of the entire Smith campus asking three questions concerning this issue – want to do it through the SGA to prevent biased answers
   E. Three questions: What are the most effective ways to communicate (Facebook, email, The Sophian, mailbox flyers, eDigest, chalking, etc.)?; What do students think are ways of presenting information that Smith should use more, or do we already have too much?; How often do students check their mailbox?
   F. Would like suggestions from senators
   G. The reason that we get so many mailings is that a lot of the staff members have been here since mailboxes were the primary means of communication
   H. People get the sense that this method of communication isn’t working as effectively anymore, but they don’t know specifics
   I. Need to give legitimacy to the issue – some people don’t believe that students don’t use their mailboxes as often as they used to
   J. Data has shown that chalking is more effective than other forms of communication
   K. Email of representative: Sarah Sargent at ssargent@smith.edu

IV. Announcements
   A. Bring $5 for t-shirts to the next meeting!
   B. Go say hello to Sharon in the SGA Office; she is SGA’s secret weapon
   C. Gavel Awards – submit nominations to Jo-Ellen El-Khoury
   D. Senators, please try to attend campus events! Part of your job as senators
   E. Rally Day – Wednesday, February 23 at 1PM in JMG
      a) All classes are canceled
      b) Smith medals are given out to alumnae who have distinguished themselves in their field
      c) Commencement speaker is announced by President Christ
      d) Rally Day Tea on Monday, February 21 at 4PM – Nanci Young does a presentation on the history of Smith and the history of Rally Day
      e) SGA hosts an event on the night before Rally Day – in the past there have been carnivals, a fashion show --> send suggestions for events to Sabine or Ali
F. Do your course critiques! They’ll be online until Friday, December 10 at 4PM
G. On Wednesday, December 8, there will be a lecture on Ireland and the debt crisis at 12PM in Dewey Common Room
H. On Thursday, December 9, in the Neilson Browsing Room at 4:15PM SmithSTAND presents Dr. Eric Reeves, professor of English and Literature on campus and full-time analyst on the Sudan, who will be speaking on the dimming prospects for peace in Sudan
I. Deadline for nominating a professor for a Sherrerd Award is Tuesday, December 14

V. Speaker – Becky Shaw – Director of Residential Life
A. Basic thing that Res Life is here to do is help build community within houses
B. Works closely with house leadership to build community and be a resource for students if they have any concerns, problems
C. In the process of advertising the selection of new Res Life staff members for next year
D. Applications are due early next semester – if interested, talk to your current Res Life staff or to your Area Coordinator about what the job entails
E. Not looking for one particular type of student because student population is so diverse both as a whole and within houses; looking for students who want to do it, have leadership abilities, are flexible with a sense of humor, must have at least a 2.5 GPA
F. Looking for Adas to become Res Life staff members for 12 Bedford, 26 Bedford, and Conway House
G. Res Life student staff members have a lot of responsibility
H. Hannah Durrant, Assistant Director of Residential Life oversees the social system; works with student coordinator of social events ---> oversees house parties, ID checkers, bartenders
I. Res Life doesn’t train students to be counselors or teach students how to fix problems but rather how to recognize issues and how to direct students to proper resources
J. Smithies need to learn how to relax and have fun, especially during finals period
K. No student staff member in the Friedman Apartments – took the hit for budget cuts; looking at an Apartment Manager position instead to be a resource and liaison
L. Room inspections are for health and safety purposes, not to snoop around; must be done twice per year for insurance purposes
M. House Coordinators (for smaller houses and the annexes) and House Community Advisers get about $100 more than work student allocation – approximately $2,700 per year
N. Head Residents get room and board; this does affect financial aid, so students who are interested in applying for a Res Life position should go talk to Financial Services
O. HR’s are required to stay over J-term; compensation may be adjusted because fewer students are choosing to stay for J-term and are instead taking advantage of off-campus opportunities
P. Res Life student staff positions are required to be on campus 7 days per week
Q. At the beginning of this year, all HR’s were returning staff but one
R. 99% of the time, Res Life student staffers are placed in houses where they have not lived previously ---> Res Life staff must enforce college policy, which can be difficult to do with one’s good friends; does not mean that Res Life staff members shouldn’t be friends with their house mates, but they should start the relationship as a Res Life staff member
S. Judicial system at Smith is meant to be educational
T. When hiring, people who will be available to serve in the Res Life position for the full year are given priority; not impossible for a student to serve in a position for only a semester at a time
V. People on waiting lists from the previous year’s room draw are asked first before open spots in various houses are given out to other students; students in temporary housing are also given priority
W. Room change request form available on the website; signatures are required before form can be submitted to Elizabeth Hait
X. Houses that remain open for break have just been reviewed and changes will be made to that list of houses will be made for next year; all information (such as whether houses have kitchens) will be considered
Y. Northrop and Gillett will be renovated in the summer of 2011
Z. As houses are renovated, trying to put in nicer kitchens
AA. All houses can’t remain open for break because we need to give staff members a break, it’s not the most efficient use of energy, etc.
BB. Res Life does everything possible to get students back into their original house once they return from being abroad, but it’s not guaranteed; as space opens, students who were abroad will be placed into those open rooms
CC. Res Life receives about 200 room change requests
DD. Rumors:
   a) All sophomores do not get singles; number of singles varies by house
   b) Approximately 75% of rooms at Smith are singles
   c) No burn time for houses
   d) Guest policy – there is no set number of days that guests may stay, it is based on a reasonable length of time; you may have a guest provided that your roommate is okay with it (if you have a roommate)
EE. Res Life staff has spent a great deal of time reviewing room sizes and evaluating them in terms of whether they should be singles or doubles, whether they should be blocked off for first years, etc.
FF. Becky Shaw’s office hours: Fridays 2PM-4PM
GG. Twelve spots in the off-campus housing lottery; other than that, students must apply and give reasons for wanting to live elsewhere; the student’s application is reviewed by a committee made up of Dave Belanger from Financial Services, Sid Dalby from the Office of Admission, Dr. Leslie Jaffe from Health Services, Elizabeth Hait and Becky Shaw from Residential Life, Kathy Zieja from Dining Services
HH. Smith is a four-year residential college with a residency requirement; many other liberal arts colleges have similar requirements
II. International students who are unable to return home are always given housing over winter break – stay in Dawes, 44 Green Street, 54 Green Street
JJ. Becky Shaw is happy to come to houses to discuss issues and to hear feedback from students
KK. There is currently a group conducting a study of Smith’s current housing; looking into building more apartment-style housing
VI. Minutes Passed

VII. SGA Cabinet Update
   A. Participated in Smith Day
   B. Helped at the Hot Chocolate Run
   C. Trying to decide what to do with excess funds

VIII. Open Floor
   A. Ideas for speakers
      a) Directors of the new centers
      b) Director of Financial Services – Dave Belanger
      c) Juliana Smoot, White House Social Secretary
   B. Issue of the student who was hit in the crosswalk outside the Campus Center; Elm Street is part of a state highway, so if there are issues, students can call the Northampton Police Department at (413) 587-1100
      a) Possible solutions are lighted yield signs or a crossing guard
   C. Traffic light at the crosswalk in front of the museum takes a long time to change

IX. Afternoon Tea Charter Passed

X. Student Activities Fee Passed
   A. Student Activities Fee will now be put to the general campus for a vote

XI. Committee Updates
   A. Dining Committee
      a) Survey was sent out a few weeks ago – 600 were sent, 145 responded
      b) Dining Committee is meeting with Kathy Zieja to go through the responses
      c) Reviews will be done in January – contact Pat Maher if interested
   B. Sustainability Committee
      a) Meeting with the Director of Facilities Management tomorrow to discuss issues such as bike racks
   C. Publicity Committee
      a) Gavel Awards
         i. First awarded by the SGA in 1985 as a way to recognize outstanding staff members; winners are given their awards at the Rally Day ceremony
         ii. One award is given to an administrative staff member, one award is given to a service staff member
         iii. Talk to your houses to let people know about nominations
   D. Curriculum Committee
      a) Do your course critiques or you will be fined $25!
         i. If you have a problem, email your class dean
      b) SGA Faculty Teaching Award nominations will begin
   E. Archives Committee
      a) Starting a blog – if you have suggestions, email Jasmine Yaas Setoodehnia

XII. ORC Election
   A. Erin Hawkins was elected to ORC

XIII. Adjournment 8:48pm