

COMMITTEE ON STUDENT LIFE ANNUAL REPORT – 2010-11

The Committee on Student Life has jurisdiction and operates in five spheres: (1) it conducts the Wendell Phillips Award competition that culminates in the choice of the undergraduate speaker at the Baccalaureate ceremony; (2) it serves as the hearing panel of first instance in cases brought against student groups for violation of university and school policies and regulations, and as the appeal panel for decisions rendered against individual students by the Dean of Students Office or decisions of the TCU Judiciary regarding individual students and student groups; (3) it oversees the operations of student government, including vetting proposed changes to the TCU Constitution to ensure that the changes would not violate university/school policies and regulations; (4) it collaborates with the Administration in the formulation of the policies and regulations that guide undergraduate life and are set out in the Pachyderm handbook and other publications; (5) it examines, if need be, other aspects of student life on the Medford campus.

The Committee on Student Life met 6 times during the academic year 2010-11.

An initial meeting was organizational, to welcome new members, review the responsibilities of the Committee as mandated by the faculty Bylaws, and preview upcoming activities. New members also participated in a training session with University Counsel Deke Mathieu, to prepare them for judicial hearings.

The Committee's major activities this academic year, under the headings delineated above, were as follows:

(1) A series of meetings were devoted to the Wendell Phillips Award competition. Committee members formulated the questions for the oral and written presentations of candidates, judged the submitted presentations in order to select the finalists, and judged the finalists' oral presentations and chose the winner, Brian Agler.

(2) The Committee received 1 petition from a student appealing a disciplinary decision made by the Judicial Affairs Officer in the Dean of Students' Office. In this case the faculty co-chair and the student chair made a determination that there was no valid basis for the appeal and that the full committee would not hear the appeal. This was in accordance with a procedure worked out by a previous chair of the Committee with University Counsel to protect the committee from an undue workload by weeding out cases that did not merit a full hearing. In these instances, the decision by consensus of the chairs is regarded as constituting an appeal.

(3) The Committee vetted one proposed referendum, to ensure that they did not violate university policies and regulations. The proposed referendum involved funding for a trial of SMS for TuftsLife. The committee agreed that the referendum did not violate university policies and regulations.

(4) Working with the Dean of Students Office, the committee had several conversations concerning policies and regulations that guide undergraduate life. In the Fall, the committee reviewed the revised policies on sexual harassment and assault and provided feedback to Dean Reitman on those policies. In the Spring, the committee discussed handling of the transition from the NQR. Based on that discussion, Dean Reitman is finalizing a transition policy, which is likely to be vetted by the committee this summer. The committee also began a discussion of faculty involvement in fraternity and sorority governance. That conversation will continue next academic year.

In addition, the faculty chair of the committee met with the chair the Equal Educational Opportunity Committee (EEOC) to discuss a procedure for implementing the Trustee-approved Policy on Freedom of Expression. The chairs agreed that most logical procedure will be for CSL to develop a set of guidelines that can eventually be included in the online Pachyderm, which instructs students on the policies of AS&E and the expectations of members of that community. Those guidelines will then be reviewed by the EEOC and modifications will be made based on feedback received from that committee. Developing these guidelines will be the one of the major tasks for the CSL in the upcoming academic year.

On behalf of the Committee on Student Life.

Thomas Downes, Chair

CSL Members: Ard Ardalan, Patrick Bressette, Veronica Carter, Alva Couch, Charles Cunningham, Joe Golia, Caroline Howe, Christina Maranci, Danilo Marchesini, Karen Overbey, Bruce Reitman, Pablo Ruiz, Philip Starks, Brian Yi (student co-chair)