

**FGLI Committee – Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2018**

Attendance:

Demetrius Colvin, Student Resource Center
Bob Coughlin, Financial Aid
Teshia Levy-Grant, Equity & Inclusion
Dean Mike Whaley, Student Affairs
Jen Wood, Student Affairs
Jill Mattus, Student Affairs
Stephanie Dukich
Jada Reid
Cameron Scharff

Dean Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting and individual introductions followed.

Dean Mike noted that at the last meeting, a note out was not sent to all students that are interested in joining one or more of the sub-committees. He provided a general call-out to all students on the committee and a follow-up note to all members of the committee will be sent.

Subcommittees:

- Financial Aid (Bob Coughlin and Michelle Jarvis)
- Communication & Website (Jen Wood & Dean Mike Whaley)
- First Gen Support and Mentoring Program (for 1st gen/low income students, support and resources) (Demetrius Colvin and Teshia Levy-Grant)

Dean Mike asked if all the subcommittees could provide the group with updates.

Group #1

Financial Aid

Bob Coughlin provided an update regarding:

- Student Health Insurance: Financial Aid submitted a New Money Request for grant funding of high-need domestic students. Financial Aid, Finance and Student Accounts have been talking about this request for a while, but this request has now been formalized and submitted. There is no further information to report, but he will keep the Committee updated on developments.
- Financial Literacy Survey: A general shout-out to please complete if one has not already done so. (Answering this survey will assist in knowing what types of topics one would like to see for a financial literacy program). FA is working to build a Financial Aid Literacy website in conjunction with Academic Affairs.
- Bob noted that he recently met with a WSA representative who inquired whether a cost of living adjustment was reflected in financial aid packages for students from high cost areas. Currently, a cost of living adjustment is not provided while determining the family contribution. To enact this change would cost approximately \$500K. This topic will be included in the list of financial aid priorities to be discussed in the sub-committee meeting.
- From last semester, students wanted to hear about how specific programs work including: 1. the Husky health insurance plan and other insurance options (There was a thought to ask the Director of Health Center to lead up the information session.) 2. Internship funding (There was a thought to ask the Director of the Career Center to lead up the information session.)

Dean Mike suggested that we line up an FGLI meeting at the beginning of the Spring semester in which Joyce Walter and Sharon Castonguay could speak about these topics.

The final FGLI meeting of the semester would then occur at the end of the semester, with a lunch or dinner, depending on the time of day the meeting occurs.

Group #2 Communication

Dean Mike noted that there has been an update to the Emergency Fund information that is available on the FGLI website. The information better articulates the kinds of needs the Emergency Fund has been covering. This information can be found under the section called Financial Resources. In addition to Emergency Fund information, more detailed information can also be found about the career development grant program and what is eligible to be covered (ie. testing fees, etc.)

Dean Mike also stated that in Spring '19, the work of the Communications sub-committee will focus on the improvement and expansion of existing information on the FGLI website. Once feedback is complete, the student-developed website that Frankie and Alba are working on, will be linked directly to the FGLI website.

Group #3 First Gen Support and Mentoring Program

Demetrius Colvin noted that they are looking forward to the expansion of the FTF program to 50 participants.

This semester, the coat and food drives were successful initiatives and received lots of donations. Refinement of both drives will occur as plans for next year's drives are developed. (Over Thanksgiving break the food pantry was open and the coat drive occurred on 12/7/18.) Teshia Levy-Grant asked if the coats were cleaned. Demetrius does not believe they were cleaned (except the donors that chose to clean them), but he will follow up for future coat drives.

Demetrius mentioned that the disability and accessibility interns met with him recently and discussed a number of topics including health insurance, conferences, internships, research, and other financial burdens that come along with being a Wes student. As a result, he tried to field their questions to departments that could potentially support with financial resources that exist. Bob asked if Financial Aid could be looped in to these meetings, as it might be helpful for staff to attend and answer questions. It could also give staff a better idea of existing needs. Dean Mike and Jen also noted that the FGLI website contains information about the career development grant, what it can cover and how it can be used. Teshia noted that the career development grant can have some limitations due to its cap of \$500. Often times, students feel as though they have been sold a bill of goods, and then feel their dreams cannot be realized once they are here, due to the financial limitations that exist. Dean Mike noted that this continues to be a perennial issue in how we support the needs of our present high-need students, while also focusing efforts on bringing more students to Wesleyan.

Dean Mike provided an update regarding dining and housing during breaks.

The goal is to implement a dining solution that would take effect next year, but first for Spring Break '19, the immediate goal would be for one dining venue to be open, likely Summerfields. The goal would be to utilize information from this offering, to develop a more comprehensive solution for next academic year.

Jen Wood asked if students would have to utilize their existing meal plan during break, which could mean running out of their existing plan. Dean Mike stated it would be an add-on to their existing plan. For the long-term, we have begun to look at dining plans offered, to see how we can re-engineer plans to help avoid these circumstances.

For health services, hours have been open to reduced hours. For counseling, small adjustments on the staff side have been necessary in order to provide coverage over break periods.

Jen asked how many students are on campus during super break. Dean Mike shared there are 100 or less students that are on campus during super break. Jen responded with a suggestion that we provide some programming to bring people together during the break. Dean Mike said that they have been talking about identifying ways to find out what's going on in the community both on campus and in Middletown.

Demetrius offered to host a pot luck during break. He also noted that MLK will be a great way to bring people of the community together, before returning from break. He asked if we could work together to get a dining hall open over this upcoming super break.

Bob and Dean Mike led a discussion around the structure of the residential comprehensive fee and that there is a proposal for one fee for all four years of a student's attendance, rather than the current structure which is the same for freshman/sophomores, but different from juniors/seniors. Demetrius asked if there is/could be any wiggle room for higher need students, differing from the basic plan offerings. Teshia let the group know that 'running out' causes a lot of anxiety, so the students do not eat during the semester because they do not want to run out of food at the end of the semester. Dean Mike mentioned that there is a budgeting tool offered on the website, to assist with meal planning. Dean Mike also mentioned that Michael Strumpf (Bon Appetit) shared that Vassar had meal plans previously, but now offers 'continual dining'. Bon Appetit discovered that with continual dining, the delta in cost was low and the students mostly 'grazed'. Jen and Bob agreed that continual dining would remove much stress and anxiety for students.

Jada Reid asked what it would take to make the shift to continuous dining. Dean Mike said the Dining Committee is currently working on it right now, designing programs to possibly suit those that have high need. The launch date would be determined by how quickly the Dining Committee can come up with their solutions, so that a plan can be developed for implementation next academic year, possibly with a partial implementation in the Spring '19, and fully implemented in Fall '19.

Jen asked why the Usdan Café can't be kept open over breaks. Dean Mike mentioned this is an option on the table.

Bob let the committee know that Financial Aid is working on improved communication with the Study Abroad office, so that it fosters improved communication with students in regards to financial aid packages and expectations for students that plan to study abroad.

Dean Mike asked the students that were present at today's meeting, if they had an idea of the sub-committees they would like to join. If they wanted the chance to think about it, they could take the time to do so, and let Dean Mike know. Students have the option to join one or more sub-committees.

The full FGLI Committee will meet at the beginning of the spring semester. Jill Mattus will send out a notification to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Mattus
Executive Assistant for the VP for Student Affairs