Advisory Committee to the Office of the Dean of Students
Annual Report, 2020-2021
(Faculty Policies & Procedures 6.57)

I. Statement of Committee Function

The Advisory Committee to the Office of the Dean of Students advises the Dean of Students and Student Advocacy in Student Affairs, the Faculty Senate, and the administration on aspects of student life not part of the formal instructional program of the university. The committee:

1. Recommends, encourages and evaluates programs and policies that support a positive learning environment and student learning outside the formal instructional program.
2. Recommends, encourages and evaluates programs and policies regarding the student social environment including issues of conduct, health and safety, harassment, and substance abuse.
3. Studies and makes recommendations regarding student academic and non-academic misconduct and related policies, rules and procedures. The committee does not hear or consider whether an existing policy or rule ought to be applied in any individual case.
4. Advises the Dean of Students on organization and priorities under their direction.

II. Activities

1. 2020-2021

The Committee met 8 times this year – 4 in the fall semester and 4 in the spring semester. One topic frequently discussed was COVID-19 pandemic response and returning to the classroom environment. Other issues the group engaged with included the following:

a. Engagement for 2nd Year Students: The Committee provided feedback and advice for the ways to engage 2nd year students during the Fall 2021 semester who had anything but a traditional first year experience during the 2020-2021 academic year. Campus incorporated these students in the Wisconsin Welcome Back event as well as other orientation events.

b. Mental Health of students: The Committee invited Jake Baggott, Executive Director, University Health Services, to share insights about the capacity of campus resources to support mental health of students.

c. Faculty flexibility and support: The Committee asked questions and provided feedback on communicating with faculty, students, and staff about the disruptive grading policy, attendance requirements, and modalities offered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also offered advice on the new campus policies related to Medical Withdrawal as part of a longer-term initiative to offer student support.

d. COVID-19 Testing and Badger Badge Program: The Dean gave regular updates to the Committee on campus policies related to testing and building access to hear from students, faculty, and staff about their experiences with the programs.

e. Amnesty Through Responsible Action: The Committee provided guidance on policy drafts and potential communication campaigns for this program that campus implemented during the Fall 2020 semester through a collaboration with UWPD, OSUSS, DOS, ASM, and HRL.
f. Campus climate related to DEI: The Committee invited Jenna Friedman, Assistant Director of Bias Response, to provide an overview of the campus bias response and reporting procedures. We also met with UW Police, Chief Kristen Roman and Louis Macias, to better understand the department’s Racial Equity Initiative. The Committee gave feedback on inclusive pronouns in remote instruction and the restorative practices initiative as well.

g. Expanding the Badger Fare program to provide immediate assistance to students who are experiencing hunger. This program supports food access for all students. Campus partners can share student names and ids with the Dean of Students Office and DOSO is able to put $75 immediately on the student WisCard. This program is a partnership with DOSO, University Union, and the Division of Continuing Studies. This program moved from the Division of Continuing Studies to the Dean of Students Office.

VII. Current Issues or Concerns

a. Academic Misconduct increased dramatically during 2020-2021 which may in part be due to the use of online chat systems and also the University utilizing HonorLock.

b. Mental Health of Students was a major focus and Elias Tsarovsky, a student representative, was part of a planning group to launch a Mental Health & Wellbeing Summit for the Campus during the Spring 2021 semester funded by the Dean of Students and in collaboration with UHS, Rec Well, Center for Healthy Minds, and DOSO.

VIII. Future Issues

- Continuing to navigate during a pandemic
- Mental Health of Students
- Wisconsin Welcome Back – Focus on 2nd Year Students for Fall 2022

X. Committee Membership, 2020-2021

4 faculty; 2 academic staff; 4 students; the dean of students, ex officio, non-voting; a non-voting representative of the administration, appointed by the provost.
Faculty
Amber Epp, Business (2021), chair
Amy Bellmore, Educational Psychology (2021)
Bikash Pattanaik, Pediatrics (2022)
Bret Larget, Statistics (2023)

Academic Staff
Chris Butler, Athletics (2022)
Nicole Wiessinger, iSchool (2023)

Students
Maylin Towne
Jai Khanna
Elias Tsarovsky
1 vacant seat

Ex officio, non-voting
Christina Olstad, Dean of Students
John Zumbrunnen, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning