



PROJECTS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

Fall 2009 Semester Report

This report, compiled by the chairpersons of the committee: Alissa Brill and Bradley Halpern, details the accomplishments of the Projects & Services Committee of the Students' Association Senate for the Fall 2009 semester. The committee is comprised of over 25 aides, all of whom collaborate with administrators from various departments to improve student life.

Dining

Alissa and Bradley met weekly with the heads of Dining to organize and improve upon the monthly Meliora Dinner Nights. During the Spring semester, the program will steer in a different direction, offering Thursday night dinners through the month of February with a steakhouse à la carte menu. Among the changes resulting from these discussions are: the extension of finals week hours in Wilson Commons on the last two days of testing to accommodate students with later exams, Southside Market extending hours until 1 a.m., and the Kosher Deli remaining open until 8 p.m. Working closely with Director of Auxiliary Operations, Cam Schauf, the committee also negotiated adding the use of FLEX to vending machines in Goergen (scheduled for Spring 2010). Issues specific to certain dining areas were brought forward, like food shortages at peak hours, and ideas such as a breakfast fruit bar continue to be discussed.

Committee aides Kirstin Barry and Tiffanie Tam worked with Cam Schauf to review the current meal plan, and did an extensive evaluation of an all-declining meal plan proposal. It was decided that meal plan changes will be placed on hold until more extensive research can be completed; no significant modifications will be made in 2010.

Alexis Ginsberg worked on advancing sustainable dining practices, in coordination with the Student Sustainability Council. Working specifically with Tony Pignogrande, the Executive Chef on campus, Alexis was able to survey many different types of students and open the floor up to lots of different methods of receiving feedback about sustainability initiatives in Dining. During discussions with Tony, Alexis brought forward initiatives such as increased signage above all composting containers throughout campus, an increase in fresh produce selection at the Corner Store, investigation of a local hummus provider, and the elimination of wasteful packaging for produce at the Corner Store.

Leah Spungen worked on behalf of all students with special dietary needs with Christina Hoh, the school's dietetic intern, to make Dining more aware of cross contamination and the need for increased availability of food-factual information. Soy ice cream bars were added to the Corner Store as a specific result of Leah's efforts. A very successful Dining focus group was held for students with specific dietary needs in December, and the committee looks forward to seeing a lot of the feedback from this forum implemented in the near future. Jen Roach also worked with Christina Hoh to verify that all

nutritional info from the dining centers is, in fact, accurate. Jen's most tangible accomplishments include advocating for the creation of nutritional spreadsheets for Connections and Hillside, where information was previously unavailable. The spreadsheets have been successfully completed, and will be available online shortly. Dialogue about the use of healthier (nonfat/low fat and lower calorie) ingredients in the Paninis at Hillside has begun and will continue throughout the Spring.

Progress also continues in each individual dining center. Class of 2011 Senator Dennis Nave worked with Dan Fernandes to bring back some student favorites from the former Meliora lunch menu, as well as make improvements to the Meliora restaurant atmosphere. Kirstin Barry met with Al Culbertson to discuss complaints and possible improvements to Douglass Dining Center, and met with students from SAVVY to discuss how Douglass can better meet the needs to vegans and vegetarians. Yoon Suk Yi consulted students who regularly eat at Danforth to gather common feedback and present those points to the manager of Danforth, Bob Fox. Kindred Harris also worked with Bob Fox regarding his other areas of purview: Hillside, Connections, and Pura Vida. Improvements resulting from Kindred's work include more routinely checking equipment for maintenance, and investigating the option of gluten free wraps at Hillside. Tim Kuchman worked with Thomas Van Pelt, manager of the Pit and Starbucks, to bring forward student concerns and to improve upon dining practices in those locations.

Parking and Transportation

Significant progress continued this Fall on last Spring's proposal for a new discount taxi service. Bradley, Alissa, and representatives from the College met frequently with Glen Sicard, Director of Parking and Transportation, to see that the program is successfully implemented by Spring 2010. As part of continued efforts to assess student sentiment, the committee produced a taxi survey. Feedback was gathered from over 100 students, in large thanks to Ana Garcia's dedication. A taxi program focus group was also held, to supplement the survey with more detail. Currently the committee is working together with Parking and Transportation to coordinate a request for proposal bid with local companies. In other areas of focus, Ana, along with Class of 2010 Senator Ryan Mills, brought forward student concerns at Parking and Transportation focus groups, yielding an extra Gold Line shuttle in the morning hours, and discussing the possibility of Red Line changes to cut the loop time in half. Ryan networked with Riverview COG concerning infrastructural improvements and coordinated a survey to assess student interest in weekend Gold Line shuttles. The opinions of that survey will continue to be communicated to Residential Life, Transportation, and the College. Lastly, Ana successfully coordinate Thanksgiving break shuttles to the Airport.

Residential Life

Kaitlin Carragher, Alissa, and Bradley met with Director of Residential Life & Housing Services Laurel Contomanolis to discuss the new Towers plans, and the idea of funding weekend shuttles to Riverview. Class of 2013 Senator Calvin Yoon toured all campus residence halls and evaluated the buildings to prioritize improvements. The committee also compiled student complaints concerning residential life that will be presented in the Spring, along with an evaluation of the Housing Lottery system.

Security

Aide Joe Ciminelli and Senator Calvin Yoon coordinated the bi-annual Walk for Light, which was held on November 17. Students and administrators from the College, Security, and Facilities assessed the safety of campus regarding lighting and blue light emergency phone accessibility. The Walk was very successful, with some improvements already visible, and a full report of the event soon to come.

Senator Dennis Nave compiled a list of issues and feedback that will be addressed in the Spring semester, involving things such as late night swipe access into dorms and Security's response to certain occurrences involving student safety concerns

Academics

Aides Lalita Movva, Ashley Haluck-Kangas, Tiffanie Tam, Class of 2012 Senator Sneha Rath and Class of 2013 Senator Shubho Bhattacharyya worked with Alissa and Bradley to discuss the current systems of advising and how they could be improved. A fruitful meeting with Dean of Freshman/Director of CCAS Marcy Kraus, Dean of Sophomores/Assistant Dean of Learning Assistance Services Vicki Roth, University Registrar Nancy Speck, and Director of Orientation/Assistant Director of CCAS Eleanor Oi yielded a new direction for projects to come. An online academics survey was created to find out which resources students find most useful, and Lalita contacted undergraduate councils to better understand the role they play for students in each department.

Daniel Peng used Facebook to help advertise the importance of filling out course evaluations, and came up with ideas for improving course evaluations in the future.

Facilities

Senator Dennis Nave and Justin Lukoff went through the Spring 2009 Walk for Facilities report and met with Jeff Foster, Director of Facilities & University Properties, and Barry McHugh, Assistant Director of Facilities Operations, to discuss progress on completing all the suggestions from the report. Significant progress was made over this

past summer, and other large-scale projects such as a much-needed Wilson Commons patio restoration have been scheduled for Summer 2010.

A new water refill station was installed outside the bathrooms in Gleason Library in response to Alissa's suggestion.

Ten new bike racks were placed around campus, guided by a proposal by Kevin Ewer and Krishna Upadhyaya. Discussions with Barry McHugh resulted in better replacement of some racks, and the plans for more bike racks to be installed in the Spring.

Information Technology

Bradley and Dale Levine continued discussions from last Spring on the SA URWireless proposal. While no tangible progress will be seen immediately, Bradley and Dale are optimistic that expansion is not far off. More specific details are expected in the Spring.

Sonja Page attended College Teaching, Learning, Technology Roundtable (CTLTR) meetings and is working with Bradley to prepare a presentation on their classroom technology strategic plan. Sonja and Bradley are piloting the new Blackboard software, which will be rolled out for Fall 2010. They will be conducting a comprehensive focus group to supplement surveys in the Spring.

Joe Ciminelli and Tim Kuchman brainstormed a list of improvements to the University Google Apps interface, especially the login page. These ideas, along with other IT improvements, were passed along in the hopes of further simplifying the way students use email and online resources.

City Cycles and Bicycle Usability

Krishna Upadhyaya and Kevin Ewer, City Cycles Coordinators, along with their assistant coordinator Aini Chen worked to establish a winter bike storage program for students who bring their bikes to campus. The program was tremendously successful, and plans indicate it will be continued in future years.

They also worked with Security to implement a tagging and registration program, in order to help identify stolen bikes and decrease bike theft on campus. They also started negotiations with an outside vendor to provide U-locks for students at an affordable price.

Various internal infrastructure changes continued to be made for City Cycles, in an effort to improve check-in/out efficiency and bicycle maintenance.

DVD Library

Senator Sneha Rath met with Nora Dimmock to discuss what can be offered at the DVD Library and the Multimedia Center in general, and how Projects & Services can assist. Certain suggestions about movies and TV shows, publicity, and funding were made.

Bookstore

General Bookstore ideas were brought to Maria Ferrante, Bookstore Manager, by Senator Shubho Bhattacharyya; including discussion of how to improve book buy-back rates, and better sales tracking. Other Bookstore aides assisted in picking five finalists for T-Shirt Design Contest, and Dale Levine, Lalita Movva, Tiffanie Tam, Yujia Zhai, and Justin Lukoff attended the Bookstore Advisory Committee meeting.

Collegiate Readership Program

Ashley Haluck-Kangas worked with Stacey Fisher, Assistant Director of Wilson Commons Student Activities, and USA Today, through negotiations of a new contract for pricing and policies regarding newspaper delivery on campus. Following the data gathered from last year's CRP secret shopper analysis, Ashley has been working to balance the numbers of each paper delivered to suit students' preferences.

University Health Service

Aides Yoon Suk Yi, Nishi Mehta, Yujia Zhai, Kindred Harris, and James Jeng served on the UR Student Health Advisory Committee, bringing forward concerns and ideas for UHS. Some specific discussions involved flu vaccines and vaccine stock, time delay in making an appointment, and the possibility of walk-in hours (or similar).

Pandemic Working Group

Alissa and Bradley sat on the Pandemic Working Group which was initiated by Director of Environmental Health & Safety Mark Cavanaugh as precaution for an H1N1 pandemic outbreak. At the meetings, PWG discussed potential outbreak situations and what protocols they would warrant (including alternative housing, changes to Meliora Weekend, transportation procedures, and academic absence policy). Alissa and Bradley criticized the communication to RAs specifically concerning "flu food" delivery procedures, and continue to monitor academic lenience in times of illness.

Event Support

Alissa and Bradley met with Event Support Managers Lynn Stork and Jon Poon, and Associate Director of Wilson Commons Student Activities Laura Ballou to communicate concerns with the price, timing, and reliability of Event Support. Furthermore, a survey on Event Support satisfaction is available via the website on all invoices, and can be found on The Hive.

A Note from the Committee

We look forward to continuing the great progress made this semester as well as focusing on other new initiatives for the Spring 2010 semester. Unfortunately, Projects & Services will be losing Senator Dennis Nave, Jen Roach, Dale Levine, Alexis Ginsberg, and Justin Lukoff next semester, but we thank them for all their hard work and wish them the best of luck! We would, however, like to extend a warm welcome to the new members who will be joining our committee: Class of 2013 Senator Rohini Bhatia, Micah Telegen, Robert Valdovinos, Drew Alessi, and Julia Liston.

This committee is driven by student feedback. We appreciate any and all students who take the time to voice their opinions to us; together, we can make a difference. To find out more about what the Projects & Services Committee does for you, visit us at <http://sa.rochester.edu/projects>.

Thanks for your involvement,

Alissa Brill & Bradley Halpern
Chairpersons of the Projects & Services Committee
University of Rochester Students' Association Government