Facilities and Healthcare Committee Meeting 29th January, 2014

Present: Michelle Kriner, Tim Altenhof, Paul Baranay, Angharad Davis, Michael Parker, Wendy Xiao  
  
Apologies: Chad Marion  
  
Meeting opened 8:45pm

1. **Project Updates**
   1. Tax advice
      1. AD stated that matters seemed well in hand for the tax advice event taking place tomorrow evening; there is a minor concern about the catering, but she will call in the morning to check that all will be well.
   2. Housing
      1. WX reported that the next meeting with large downtown landlords (following the successful meeting with Pike International) will take place in a few weeks’ time.
      2. WX has also completed much of the organisation needed for the upcoming Housing Fair, which will take place on Thursday, 13th February (5-7pm) in the Harkness ballroom.
         1. Currently, three companies (Chelsea, Pike International, the Eli) are confirmed as attending, of the 13 originally invited.
         2. MP suggested that WX add some companies centred in Westville, since more students are starting to live out that way. He also suggested adding companies with buildings located in southern Hamden.
         3. WX will look into additional companies to invite to the event, and expand the number of tables etc. as necessary.
         4. WX plans to advertise the housing fair by means of mass email, and perhaps fliers as well.
            1. AD suggested that WX email the GSA publicity committee to coordinate emailing, as they are able to include notices in the GPSS and MacDougal Center emails which go out to grad and professional students.
            2. MK noted that the easiest way to distribute fliers was to hand them out to representatives at the GSA general assembly.
         5. WX would appreciate the assistance of some FHC members at the housing fair.
      3. WX reported on the Housing Committee’s plans for the forthcoming renovation of HGS.
         1. Her understanding is that all student rooms (approx. 120 beds) will be removed, to be replaced by apartment-style student dwellings on Broadway. These should open by Summer 2014, with no student accommodation being offered in HGS in the academic year 2014-15. It is unclear at this point how students in the new Broadway dwellings will be accommodated with regard to HGS meal plans.
         2. MP noted that students currently housed in HGS really ought to be notified of this prospective change soon, so that they can make alternative living arrangements. MK suggested that WX ask for clarification of the timeline of the project at the next Housing Committee meeting.
         3. PB said that he understood there were some issues with the HGS tower; WX stated that her impression was that the tower is in some way not in line with current building codes, and so cannot still contain student housing after the renovation of HGS.
         4. MK enquired if the HGS Renovation Committee had been disbanded, as that committee has theoretically paused only until after the Housing Committee had met. According to WX, it seems that the HGS renovation decisions have largely been made at this point.
         5. MP asked when renovations will start; WX was not completely certain, but Summer or Fall 2014 seems likely.
         6. TA enquired what exactly is being renovated (is the work primarily centred on the interior or exterior of the building; residential vs office areas etc.). WX replied that the university seems to be planning internal renovations along the lines of the refurbishment of Helen Hadley Hall, so that dorms and common areas would be renovated without significant structural changes being undertaken.
   3. Mental Health
      1. AD reported that she and MP met with Shayna from the GSA publicity committee to discuss the proposed mental health awareness flyering campaign. This was a productive meeting, but it became evident that further discussion is needed before more progress can be made.
         1. MK enquired if it was planned that this should be an initiative solely of the GSA, or if other parties would be included. MP noted that this is one of the issues under discussion.
         2. MP observed that it will be necessary to discuss what we hope to gain from the flyering campaign, as this will inevitably shape the nature of the endeavour. He suggested that a one-time poster campaign might be less pertinent to the GSA’s purview, and could arguably be better performed by a different organisation. MP was of the opinion that, in collaboration with a small contingent of members from both the facilities/healthcare and publicity committees, a recurring project might be preferable.
         3. MP suggested that PB could bring up the issue at one of the collaborative multi-organisation mental health meetings he attends; PB suggested that MP could also attend these meetings to discuss the issue and work out where to go from here.
      2. PB noted that there are a number of mental health-related meetings coming up.
         1. The broader graduate student mental health group (including representatives from GSA, GPSS and so forth) is meeting in two weeks.
         2. The undergraduate Coalition for Mental Health & Wellbeing at Yale is meeting on the 8th of February; it is unclear at this point what the exact position of graduate students is with respect to this organisation.
         3. A second meeting with Kim Goff-Crews, Dr Siggins, and Dr Jensen has been scheduled to take place on the 25th of February.
      3. Other issues
         1. PB previously reached out to the Associate Provost to suggest the possibility of creating a centralised website listing all the available mental health resources at Yale. At this point, the Associate Provost has not replied, so it may be time to reinitiate contact soon.
         2. PB also reported that there seems to be anecdotal evidence to suggest that, per the concerns of the GSA/GPSS report etc., additional support is now being provided to students at Yale Mental Health and Counselling between intake and their first appointment (e.g. being encouraged to contact their intake physician in the meantime). This is an encouraging development.
   4. Payne Whitney Gym
      1. MK noted that FHC hasn’t been very active on the issue of the Payne Whitney Gym this year.
      2. MK received an email from Eugene Douglas (former FHC chair); he wants to meet with gym administrators to discuss hiring some of the athletic space and wondered if we had a standing meeting that he could join in with.
         1. MP has the impression that athletic facilities are extremely unavailable, even when they’re not booked by others.
         2. MK asked if anyone would be interested in taking the gym issue on. MP said that he would potentially be interested in going along to a meeting with gym administrators; MK will facilitate an introduction between MP and Eugene.
      3. TA asked if additional information had been forthcoming about the additional hours of pool closure in the afternoons; the committee did not think so.
      4. MP noted that the gym’s lack of transparency is an issue. PB commented that there is no PWG members’ advisory committee, and perhaps this would be a good idea.
         1. MP was dubious about how much weight grad students’ voices could hold in that conversation.
         2. PB suggested that we look into how other universities govern their gyms. MP thought that this was the point of the GSA report and pilot study recommendation; MK and PB said that this would be a broader advisory committee representing all the gym users, including students, faculty etc.
         3. MP asked who we would bring this issue to, and suggested Dean Pollard. PB said that we could consult with colleagues, YCC representatives etc., to see if there is a consensus on these issues and the need for a committee; additionally, someone might look at Yale Health’s Member Advisory Committee and how it came to be.
      5. MP was concerned about the delay on the extended gym hours pilot program; MK reports that according to Brian Dunican, there has been some movement on that recently.
2. **Concerns/Ideas from the Floor** 
   1. Survey
      1. AD noted that last semester we talked about raising various issues with the student body by means of a survey (including questions about pastoral care for grad students, and parental/family care issues affecting grad students). AD was interested in knowing: (a) if there are other issues people would like to include in such a survey, (b) if such a survey should be opened up to other committees, and (c) if there are recommendations about how such a survey should be disseminated.
         1. PB suggested that the appropriate avenue would be to construct a Qualtrix survey, which anyone with a Yale address can build. He also commented that an issue might be getting the GSA powers-that-be to get involved with disseminating the survey, since the GSA has its own survey that goes out at the end of the semester. However, a case can be made for sending a smaller survey out earlier, so that we could work with the results.
         2. MK suggested that we could construct a broader grad student healthcare survey, since both the issues mentioned fall broadly under that heading.
            1. MK suggested that we might also include questions about dental and vision coverage, since this is a frequent commented-upon topic. (However, there aren’t that many options for improving this coverage, since rates would need to be raised significantly to offer more than is already available.)

WX noted that the dental and vision care currently offered is already quite expensive. MK stated that in some respects, the dental coverage isn’t exactly insurance, just coverage for bi-annual cleanings and also for fillings (but only with lower-tier dentists). MK asked if it would be possible to push people towards these lower tier dentists and thereby improve services without vastly increasing costs?

MK noted that the vision plan hasn’t changed much in the past few years. MK would like to see it altered to include contact lens exams.

MK suggested that specific questions about these be included to try and find out what students want.

* + - 1. MK said that if we have sufficient questions and the survey can be ready soon, it would be better to go ahead with it now than to wait until the end of the year.
      2. PB doesn’t think that the GSA currently over-burdens its constituents with emails, and so the survey would not cause an additional problem.
         1. PB suggested that we consider moving towards a model of weekly GSA update emails.
      3. MK volunteered to assist AD with the survey; they will be in contact and report back.

Meeting adjourned 9:18pm