Advisory Council Spring Online Meeting March 22, 2020

Minutes


Members Absent: Amy Bronson, Craig Levis, Dale DiMento, Debra Ross, Doreen Morrissey, George Sanchez, Joe Kaplan, Lori Lamson, Michelle White, Theresa Tiernan

Staff Present: Pallavi Bandalli, Rose Boulay

Welcome and Introductions: The meeting started at 12 noon with Penny and Mary presiding. Rose welcomed all the current and new members to the online meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Featured Speakers:

- Brandi Hephner LaBanc, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life:
  Rose introduced and welcomed Dr. LaBanc to the Advisory Council meeting. Dr. LaBanc joined UMass 2 months ago, prior to this, she was a vice chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at the University of Mississippi. She spoke about current COVID-19 situation and the decisions undertaken by the university. Current focus is on the transition to online learning for students while also working on other logistic aspects such as move out, social distancing etc. University is trying to be flexible, adapting to new changes, trying to offer support, and opportunities to engage students.
  Members showed gratitude, appreciated the support and decisions taken by the university and suggested about community volunteer services in the local area to pack and ship students’ belongings, Dr. LaBanc suggested members to reach out to Residential Life to share ideas. Rose thanked Brandi LaBanc for her time and for the information especially during this pressing time.

- Elizabeth (Betsy) Cracco, Ph.D., Executive Director for Wellbeing, Access, and Prevention:
  Rose introduced and welcomed Dr. Cracco. Dr. Cracco joined UMass recently with a career in college mental health and worked in many other universities prior to UMass. She appreciated the council members for following gratitude, flexibility, sense of kindness, open communication channels during these unprecedented times. She gave a PowerPoint presentation on psychological wellbeing along with the links to resources to follow especially during the COVID-19 situation that unfolds every day.
- **Foster Student Success Fund: Wilma Crespo, Director of CMASS (Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success)**

Rose welcomed and introduced Wilma Crespo. Wilma shared that CMASS office is involved with foster care initiative for 4 years. She said that currently there are 18 identified foster students with the help of Financial Aid office. These students have very diverse interests/needs and one-size model doesn’t work in supporting these students. These students are connected to Dean of Students Office where they have a case manager to handle complex situations that the students come across. She explained that there need to be $25,000 to begin an endowment and currently the available funds are about $10,000 that can still be utilized and also fundraised to reach the goal if the group decides to achieve. For students to request the funds, there is an application process modelled after the micro-grant application process and the applications are reviewed by a committee. Rose also explained how Foster Student Success Fund began and asked members if they have any questions about the funds.

One question was about the reason for endowment and how to achieve $25,000. Wilma explained that that amount $25,000 is needed to reach endowment status and can be done by
collaborating with the Office of Development or other strategies like finding matching funds donors etc. Once endowment status is reached, $5,000 will be generated annually from that fund. Outreach Committee members came forward to discuss more ideas about gift cards and other fundraising ideas to support the cause. Rose thanked Wilma for her time and clarifying the questions that the Council had.

**Updates**

- **UMass Gives:**
  The decision regarding the UMass Gives has not been made yet but the department is thinking of doing something in terms of caring those in need as opposed to asking donation to the university. The UMass Gives committee is thinking to raise money for Student Care program. More information will be forthcoming.

- **URep UMass** is cancelled.

- **Summer NSO Family Orientation:**
  Decisions about orientation has not made yet but it will not be in person orientation this summer. Both student orientation and family orientation may happen online. More information regarding this will be informed to the council once the decision is made.

**Elections**

Currently some of the leadership positions are vacant. Due to the time constraint, OPS will communicate about this via email with the list of vacant positions, description and duties of each position. Rose asked members to review them and let OPS know if members are interested in serving any of these positions.

- Advisory Council Co-chair
- Special Events Co-chair
- Social Media Co-chair
- Community Service/Outreach Chair

**Acknowledgement of Outgoing Members:** George Sanchez, Michelle White, Merce Meredith and Penny Nichols-Cordero will complete their term in May and Mimi Mumm will complete her emeritus status. Rose took this moment to thank them for their time and service. Penny and Merce will stay on the council to serve as emeritus. OPS is extremely grateful and thanked them for staying put. To show appreciation, OPS will mail them the certificates as soon as they are able.

**Announcements**

- **Advisory Council Conference Calls:** The last meeting for the spring 2020 is scheduled for April 15 @ 5:30 p.m. Some of the members wanted to meet once in 2 weeks till the end of May to discuss and know more about current situation. OPS will email members to vote if everyone is in favor of more meetings or just one as scheduled.

**Meeting Adjourned at 2 p.m.**

*Lisa Silletti, recording secretary*