Caucus 1

April 1st 2008, Minutes

Gideon: There are two new people up for voting membership this meeting: Rachel Schoenberg and Ella Patrick. (Both were approved)
Candace: We will now move on to the grant proposal discussed last week. Are there questions? (None) The documents being voted on are two separate forms, the application and the review form. If we have two-thirds majority we will move to a vote. (2/3rds passes): 21 approved, 1 against Grant proposal passes. Any committee reports?
Cathy: each PAC member has requested funds and given a description of their purpose. If this aligns with the projected budget, then they will go through.
Ian Robertson: WP Advisory- There is a survey coming out on the work program: Are we meeting the mission statement? How should we plan for the future? Please look out for it.
Laura: Is the economic recession factored into the budget?
Cathy: There is more of a focus on the current endowment, but is definitely a factor considered. It certainly explains a lot of the rising tuition costs.
Gideon: The co-conveners met with Larry Modlin last Friday. We are looking for a way to present the budget, which will be coming up soon. We have the results from the T.V. survey for Gladfelter. It will be on next week’s agenda.
Franklin: Is there any possibility of a community meeting based on the budget?
Rachel: No plans as of yet, but it will be taken into consideration.
Candace: Let’s move on to the focus of this week’s meeting: food. Craig, Brian, Karen, and Ian are all here to discuss.
Brian: Sodexho runs all of the college’s food services. They try to focus on sustainability and meet the various needs of a wide range of diets. Our biggest challenge is meeting diverse customer needs.
Karen: The garden is grown on three acres. Half of what we grow goes to Sodexho in the fall. Almost all of the produce in the spring goes to be sold in farmer’s markets. Most stays on campus.
Ian: My job is basically to oversee the farm and garden.
Gordon: Do the farm and garden have mission statements?
Ian: The farm and garden support the mission statement of the school.
Karen: There is a fine line between a “real” farm and an education farm. We want to give the students experience whether or not it brings in revenue.
GR: Could you describe the relationship between Sodexho and the farm?
Brian: I decide the price of produce each week. The same price is paid to outside sources.
Ian: What the farm makes is not equal to what we could be making if we sold outside of the school.
Franklin: What is Sodexho doing to help us maintain local foods even when they are not in season?
Brian: We often use a local farmer’s market. It allows us to stay more organic.
Candace: What about this talk of flash freezers?
Brian: This is something we are looking at. The biggest challenge to that is that students are not here during the biggest growing season, the summer. Nonetheless, a flash freezer would be a great way to keep food in the summer.
Emily: Is anyone aware exactly how much food is composted annually?
Chelsea: I work for recycling and on average we compost about 250 pounds of food per day.
Franklin: FYI: Dining services will be sponsoring a clean plate club soon.
Lindsay: It’s the week of the 21st.
Jane: Do you think what we consume affects what’s bought?
Brian: Absolutely- the menu is always up for discussion, too.
Cody: Do you have a clear definition of getting as much local “as possible”?
Brian: For me, I like broader definitions of local. To me, getting peaches from Georgia is certainly better than shipping them all the way from California.
Ella: what is the percentage of local foods?
Craig: It varies from week to week. But, for example, if you ate spinach this week, it was from the garden.
Brian: The annual food budget is $450,000, $20,00 of that is spent on local food.
Ben B: With the possibility of flash freezing, are there ways to expand the garden?
Karen: Sandy will decide how to go about this and what our options are.
Ian: We are looking to increase our yields, possibly by shifting some management styles.
Will: Sodexho wants to buy as much local as possible… is there a set goal?
Brian: At this point in time, no. It’s something we’re working on.
Alex M: Can we save more food instead of selling it?
Karen: It’s really not one or the other. That won’t make a difference. With flash freezing we’ll have a lot more options.
Brian: The process we have now is very inefficient.
Kate Z: Could you talk about Sodexho as a corporation?
Brian: It was started in France, separate from Cisco, when they wanted to move to the American market they were bought out by Marriott. As a company they are trying to go green.
Kate: it is solely food service, I have heard that they own some prisons in Europe.
Brian: No, its not solely food service, but I don’t think they own any prisons.
Kate: I’m pretty sure they still own Callix.
Gretchen: Is there any possibility of canning as a way of saving foods?
Karen: This has been tried out before and its fairly inefficient. It takes a lot of experience and a lot more money than you might think.
Craig: To be efficient, it has to be on a large scale.
Karen: However, Ian has approved one student of doing food preserving this summer.
Ben: It seems like we have an unusual contract with Sodexho…
Brian: We have a lot more leeway than other schools, specifically, Sodexho has no business with Sage.
Cathy: We definitely have a good relationship with them.
Rachel S: Is there any possibility of more flexibility with the meal plan?
Brian: Right now we don’t have a lot of options, its something to be discussed in the future of meal plans with less meals.
Candice: Each meal would cost more with smaller meal plans, though.
Cathy: Requiring less people on the meal plan makes the price go up as well.
Jane: Have you considered more multi-cultural meal options?
Brian: We try to run as much as we can.
Craig: In Cowpie, I definitely get a lot of inspiration from other cultures. We are having another formal dinner at the end of April in which this will be expressed.
Kate: What’s the best way to get information about Sodexho besides the website? 
Brian: You can always come talk to me and I will give you as much info as I can.
Gideon: Thank all of our guests for coming tonight.
Lindsay: If you have any further questions e-mail dining services committee!