October 9, 2007

Student Caucus began, as it does, with committee reports – specifically Big Marketing Group – followed soon after by a report by our student trustee, Ryan Mora, who concluded the long and involved process of setting up trustee lunches with a reminder for all of those who signed up to be in Canon at noon on Friday the 12th.

The first item on the agenda was a discussion on the newly proposed consensual relationships policy put forth at Staff Forum on September 26th. This new policy advises that no relationship between a student and a member of the staff, faculty, or a volunteer working at the college should be permitted, having been requested by the president under the belief that no relationship with such a power differential can be truly consensual. Students expressed outrage, feeling that the language of the proposal suggests that students are not only blameless in regards to starting such relationships, but that they are, in fact, not mature enough to make such decisions on their own. Several students pointed out that there are students attending the college who are older than some of their professors, and a fair number of the college staff are current or recently graduated students. Caucus at large complained that this policy is the “next smoking policy,” wherein, seeing that an old policy is not being enforced, the administration calls for a new and harsher policy to be put into place. Another focus of contention was the listed examples of acceptable proof that must be presented when accusing a college employee and a student of taking part in a romantic relationship, i.e. photos and love letters. All present generally felt that this list is not only juvenile, but also that it promotes behavior that is inappropriate for a community of responsible and considerate adults.

Kelly Kelbel from RISE held the next slot on the agenda, but the discussion remained focused on the proposed consensual relationships policy. Kelly informed the Caucus that RISE held no part in the drafting of this policy, though she believes that the RISE crew could have provided important information to the research necessary in the development of a policy of this magnitude. Seeing that the general mood of the meeting made it obvious that students feel a need to have their voices heard in the discussion of this policy, Caucus took an informal vote of all present who oppose the policy in its current state. No students voted for the policy, and only three abstained. This vote, as well as a list of opinions presented at the Caucus meeting, was taken by two of the co-conveners – Lindsy and Candace – to the next Staff Forum meeting on October 10th. Caucus also proposed to write a resolution in regards to the new policy, and any student who wishes to aid in drafting said resolution is encouraged to come to the Student Caucus office to talk to the co-conveners.

The meeting ended with a brief report on the new php boards being constructed by Wes to aid in opening up Caucus discussions to the student body at large. More information will follow at the next meeting on Tuesday, October 16th.

Ended 7:30pm