



# Structure and Program Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016

5:00pm

VU460

**Members:** *Present:* Emma J. Opsal (AS Assessment Coordinator, Chair); Anujin Ganbat (Student-at-Large); A Blyth (AS Sexual Awareness Center Coordinator); Hannah Brock (AS VP for Business and Operations)  
*Absent:* Luciane DeAlmeida (AS Queer Resource Center Assistant Coordinator)

**Advisors:** Lisa Rosenberg (Assistant Director for Student Activities)

**Secretary:** Octavia Schultz (AS Board Assistant for Internal Committees)

**Guests:** Brandon Quackenbush (AS Veterans Outreach Center Coordinator); Alan Leung (AS Productions Assistant Director for Marketing & Assessment); Jonah Lalk (AS Productions Director); Jenn Cook (Student Activities Advisor)

## Motions:

**SPAC-16-W-1** To approve the minutes from November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015. **Passed.**

**SPAC-16-W-2** To approve the minutes from December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. **Passed.**

*Opsal called the meeting to order at 5:04pm.*

## I. Approval of the Minutes

*MO TION SPA C-16- W-1 by Opsal  
To approve minutes from November 19<sup>h</sup>, 2015.*

Second: Ganbat Vote: 2-0-1

Action: Passed

*MO TION SPA C-16- W-2 by Opsal  
To approve minutes from December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.*

Second: N/A

Vote: 2-0-1

Action: Passed

## II. Discussion

- a. Opsal noted that the Club Activities Office may have been moved from Group 1 to Group 2 for time sensitivity. Blyth inquired if the information from the survey referenced in the documents was available to the committee. Opsal confirmed that it was, and noted that it was valuable information to include when recommendations were brought to the AS Board of Directors. Blyth noted it was unclear when the data was collected. Brock stated she had concerns about the game Humans vs. Zombies that took place on campus, and how that affected campus climate. Blyth stated they had been in classes that were cancelled because of the game. They also referenced their time as a tour guide for the university and sited an instance where potential new students witnessed the game and that some were made uncomfortable by it. They noted there had been more 'peacekeepers' for the game that year, and explained that players wearing light green armbands were

available to listen to and address concerns about the game and other players' behavior. Opsal stated she had been knocked over twice by players while she herself had not been participating.

b. AS Veteran's Outreach Center Presentation

Quackenbush entered. He gave the committee a brief overview of the Veterans Outreach Center, noting that he was the only employee of the office. He emphasized the office's commitment to the responsible effective use of student fees. He stated the office programmed social events for veterans. He noted the AS Veterans Outreach Center and the university's Veterans Service Office worked together, along with other organizations within the Bellingham community. He stated that organically creating a community for veterans on campus had been difficult. He noted the Western Veterans Club had dissolved previously, and that the number of veterans that used the resources of the AS Veterans Outreach Center had dropped afterward. He stated that campus climate, and peer counseling services were challenges that faced the Veterans Outreach Center. He noted that the office had started a survey to inquire about campus climate and how comfortable veterans felt on campus. The results had been varied, but there had been responses that stated it was uncomfortable to openly identifying as a veteran in classroom setting. He stated that after personally speaking with veterans, they expressed the need for a communal space to socialize and connect. Quackenbush noted the Veterans Service Office had more space than the AS Veterans Outreach Center. He noted that because the AS Veterans Outreach Center and the Veterans Service Office had very similar missions, he often referred veteran students to the Veterans Service Office because that office had more resources and could assist veteran students with G.I. Bill services as well. He noted that the AS Veterans Outreach Center had successful event programming, and the events hosted by the office had high attendance, citing data from the documents. He recommended changing procedures to allow the AS Veterans Outreach Center to work more closely with the Veterans Service Office, reducing the number of events required by the AS Veterans Outreach Center to just the few larger and more successful events, and allowing the Veterans Service Office to focus on informal gathering spaces for student veterans. He stated it was an irresponsible use of student fees to fund an event with low attendance. He also noted that there had previously been a representative from AmeriCorps on campus that focused on outreach to veteran students. He stated the position had been funded through a grant and worked out of the Veterans Service Office but the position had been eliminated the previous year due to a miscommunication between offices, and could have been brought back. Blyth inquired if the survey about campus climate was still being conducted at the time. Quackenbush stated that the survey was going to be sent out with the winter newsletter, the results were to be compiled, and would be presented to the veterans the following February. Rosenberg inquired the results from the survey the previous year had been reviewed. Quackenbush confirmed that they had, and that the questions for the survey for the 2016 year had been changed and edited from the previous version to be more effective. Rosenberg inquired if Quackenbush had been keeping in contact with the Veterans Service Office as recommendations were being formed. Quackenbush stated he had been participating in weekly check ins with the Veterans Service Office that had been successful for collaboration.

### c. Underground Coffeehouse Presentation

Leung, Cook, and Falk entered. Leung noted the mission statement of the Underground Coffeehouse had been edited from the previous year to better reflect the changing climate of the Underground Coffeehouse. He noted the program provided four free events for students to attend each week. Rosenberg inquired if the mission statement presented had been edited from the most recently approved version. Leung stated some grammatical errors had been corrected. Rosenberg noted the changes needed to be officially approved. Leung stated the program had conducted surveys to assess and improve the Underground Coffeehouse, though the surveys had not been very in depth or received a lot of responses. He noted a Trivia Night had been introduced the previous quarter. Falk stated the program had hosted Trivia Nights in the past and was looking to host them more regularly, along with Karaoke Nights. Rosenberg inquired if the committee were able to look the numbers of attendance at all events from the previous few years. Falk and Leung stated they would have that information available at the following meeting they attended. Leung noted that on multiple occasions, employees from AS Productions had surveyed individuals before Open Mie Nights and Wednesday Night Concerts, but stated that limited the number of people surveyed, because attendees arrived closer to the start time of the events. He stated the results concluded that over 45% of the attendees were first year students, 90% of the attendees had heard about the event through word-of-mouth, and that many people recommended the Wednesday Night Concert Series over the weekly Open Mie Nights. Ganbat stated that the location of the Underground Coffeehouse was difficult to find for many people. Blyth stated the Underground was a great place for students to socialize, and many students would stay for events once they had started. Brock suggested changing the format of the surveys conducted to request personal information at the end of the survey. She inquired how the surveys were conducted. Leung stated they were conducted online via tablets. There was discussion about what kind of questions to include in surveys in order to assess how well the program was serving different demographics, while not making it seem invasive to students. Leung stated that gender neutral bathrooms were provided at all AS Productions and Underground Coffeehouse events. Blyth inquired how it was determined if security was needed at events. Falk stated security was provided through Event Services and the decision was made between the office and AS Productions about whether to have security at an event. Blyth inquired about how the presence of security specifically impacted events, and asked if the security staff would have been the appropriate people to handle harmful experiences students had regarding the gender neutral restrooms. Cook stated it was dependent upon the gravity of the situation, whether security was present at the event, and whether student staff felt comfortable enough to address it or needed to contact someone else. Blyth also brought up concerns of privacy for more intimate events with sensitive subject matter. Falk stated there were concerns about hosting closed-door events because the Underground Coffeehouse was a shared space with the company Aramark. Blyth suggested using signs outside of the space to inform people of events with sensitive subject matter. Brock inquired if attendance had been high at events that year. Falk noted that attendance had been high for Open Mie Nights during fall quarter. Ganbat asked how attendance was recorded for events. Falk stated that if security was present at an event, attendance was tracked through the security

staff, otherwise the coordinator of the event would count the number of attendees every hour. Leung, Cook, and Falk exited.

### **III. Debrief**

#### **a. Veterans Outreach Center**

Brock suggested relocating the AS Veterans Outreach Center to the location of the Veterans Service Office, because the two offices were already forming a close partnership. She noted that the current space of the AS Veterans Outreach Center was small and uninviting, and the office was not receiving many visitors. She stated that moving the office would also mean less offices to move during the remodel of the Viking Union. She suggested removing the peer counseling part of the office, as it was underutilized, and focusing on programming and larger events. Opsal stated that in order for the office to remain a part of the Resource and Outreach Programs it needed to provide some sort of peer counseling service. She suggested shifting the peer advising to cater to veterans of intersecting identities. Blyth expressed their concern with having the offices of Resource and Outreach Programs spread out across campus, stating it was advantageous to have all of the offices together. They also stated that the Veterans Outreach Center was somewhat separate from the rest of the Resource and Outreach Program, and suggested that if the office were moved requiring liaison to report to the AS. Brock stated it was confusing to have two offices on campus with the same purpose and mission. She stated a creative solution for the office was required. Opsal added that many veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were triggered by small spaces like that of the Veterans Outreach Center. Rosenberg stated that in the past smaller and informal events had been successful for the office. She also stated that the space of the Veterans Service Office had changed in the previous few years. Brock expressed her concern with the peer advising requirements of the Resource and Outreach Programs, stating that the employees in those offices were not receiving the resources or training they needed to provide those services to students. Ganbat agreed that the peer advising services needed improvement, citing personal examples. Blyth suggested moving the programming portion of the Veterans Outreach Center to the Veterans Service Office. Ganbat suggested using technology and social media to reach out to veterans that may not have been comfortable participating or using those resources in person. Opsal posed the question of how to support veteran students without dehumanizing other students on campus, citing a problematic showing of the movie 'American Sniper' that was shown the previous year. Blyth expressed their concern with the lack of recognition for the people on the opposite side of conflicts, citing a demonstration by the Veterans Outreach Center to honor US veterans who had perished in conflict. Rosenberg stated that was important feedback to consider.

#### **b. Underground Coffeehouse**

Ganbat stated that she had previously taken a survey for AS Productions during a concert, and said she had felt uncomfortable with how the employees approached her to ask her to participate. Brock stated that a table should have been set up near the entrance to advertise the survey. Blyth stated it was also problematic it was difficult to take the survey when approached due to the crowding that occurred during events. Brock stated that the demographic questions on the survey were also not very effective or diverse. Blyth pointed out that the question specific to how attendees heard about events did not have options that were specific enough to have been very useful to the

office. Ganbat agreed. Brock stated more outreach to upperclassmen was needed. She also suggested setting themes for events, as that greatly impacted attendance. It was noted that other events were hosted in the Underground Coffeehouse by groups that reserved the space. Brock stated there was a concern with the Open Mie Night in monitoring material to ensure that it was inclusive and safe for all attendees. It was suggested to create official guidelines for the material of Open Mie Night performers. Ganbat suggested reaching out to upperclassmen to gain more attendance at events. Blyth noted that many first-year students lived on campus and were more likely to attend later events because they were still on campus. They suggested hosting some events earlier to appeal to upperclassmen that were not usually on campus at night. Brock suggested including the marketing coordinator for the program in the assessment process to review the Underground Coffeehouse's marketing strategies.

#### **IV. Adjourn**

*Opsal adjourned the Meeting at 6:35pm.*