

**Nebraska Wesleyan University**  
**Parents' Council Minutes**  
**April 21, 2007**

**In attendance:** Cheri and Milo Anderson, Linda Baker, Cathy and Charlie Barringer, Greg Bergt, Ann Diers, Lori Eversoll, Connie Harmon, Wendy Hestermann, Dee Hutchins, Ken Kluck, Larry and Angie Lewandowski, Cindy Lloyd, Cathy Maddox, Jenny Minchow, Stephanie Morse, Sue Outson, Barb Sahling, Elaine Thiel, Steve Weber, Julie Buss, Kathy Shellogg, and Sara Boatman

### **Safety and Security Issues**

Sara Boatman explained Nebraska Wesleyan's Crisis Communication Plan that currently uses e-mail to communicate to students, faculty and staff. Maintenance Staff in each building have mobile radios so they can receive information and communicate with people in their buildings in case of emergency. If parents need information regarding any specific situations on campus, they should go directly to the website at [www.nebrwesleyan.edu](http://www.nebrwesleyan.edu). The University Administration is looking into text messaging software to expedite emergency messages to students, faculty and staff, and are also updating the University's crisis management plan regularly.

Residence hall staff observe students and pay attention to signs of unusual behavior. Faculty will notify the Student Support System if there is a change in student behavior. There is less emphasis on intervention and more on observing and getting help for the student. A new policy will give NWU the right to involuntarily remove a student if conditions warrant and proper procedures are followed. When a student is suspended, key personnel are notified. Parents are notified if a student's behavior is such that the University feels that he/she is a threat to him/herself.

Centennial Hall now has a fully operational sprinkler system. The new sprinkler systems that are being installed in the residential facilities do not include public address systems. A federal grant has been submitted in conjunction with the City of Lincoln which would pay for 75% of the cost to install sprinkler systems in Greek Chapter Houses. Wesleyan will work with the chapters to fundraise the remaining cost.

Parents want NWU to keep parking issues in mind as it still seems difficult to park on campus even though 102 spots were added last year. The city bus system is marginal, but a study was just completed and hopefully the city will make changes.

## **Study Abroad, Internships, Service Learning, and Other Experiential Learning Opportunities**

Geri Cotter, Director of the Career and Counseling Center, explained that internships are generally completed in the junior or senior year and are tied to a major, and that service learning can be done any time throughout the academic career and is tied to class expectations. Students generally begin service learning in a specific class and then frequently continue to serve after the class is completed. She also explained that Global Service Learning is a student organization that does local, national and international service.

Geri Cotter and Tieree Smith, Director of Multicultural Programs and Services, explained Nebraska Wesleyan's cultural immersion experiences. Students travel with a faculty/staff member to immerse themselves in a culture or many cultures. They participate in daily group activities, complete reflective papers and engage in group conversations to discuss the experience and what they have learned from it. Recent cultural immersion experiences have included trips to Chicago and Washington D.C.

Inger Bull, Director of International Education, discussed opportunities for students to study abroad. About 1%-2% of students study abroad. Students at any level can take short trips abroad and this usually leads to longer (semester or an entire academic year) study abroad experiences. Fifty-one students went abroad this fall and seven went for a year of study. There are a variety of programs offered by individual faculty members and through the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP).

## **Greek Life**

Sara Boatman asked parents for their impressions of Greek life. Impressions were quite varied. Parents agreed that it is important to Greek students and non-Greek students to find a group of people who are similar to themselves with whom they will associate. Greek recruitment/rush provides this immediate group of people for Greek students. GPAs are important in Greek Chapters and leadership roles can be found both in and outside of Greek chapters. It seems that "partying" is associated with Greek chapters even though there are alcohol issues in residential facilities as well. Panhellenic has strict rules on Sorority recruitment and it can be difficult for some chapters to recruit new members. Some parents stated an opinion that Fraternities need to tighten recruitment rules and Sororities need to loosen up to encourage more people to join Greek chapters. Parents noted that Greek chapters are competing with athletics, theatre and music groups for members. Parents stated that it seem to them that new students have a perception that Fraternities are preppy and that members of Sororities are shallow and focused on looks at the expense of substance. While all agreed that these stereotypes are inaccurate, they also agreed that they exist with a fair number of their students and others.

## **Alcohol Issues**

Sara Boatman gave an overview of the Alcohol Edu program and shared results of the Alcohol Edu assessment. Parents stated that they are role models for their students, and that many college student' drinking habits are formed in high school. These learned behaviors can be practiced with more freedom in college. Parents agreed that it would be interesting to have graduating seniors take the same assessment to see the difference in behaviors from first year students. At this time the assessment focuses on "the college effect" with entering students.

## **New Student Registration**

Sara Boatman asked the members present if there were ideas for a session for parents sending additional children to NWU. Some suggestions for discussion:

- Each child is different
- Discuss things that have changed at NWU
- What did you miss the first time
- Siblings together on campus
- Open discussion

## **Communication**

Parents agreed that Wesleyan should have a place on the website or another way that parents can subscribe to get e-mail updates of events and happenings on campus. Pod casts on different topics of interest would be nice as well as a Facebook page for parents of NWU students. A simple listing on the web of departments and who to talk to with questions or concerns would be helpful as well as a link to the [Lincoln Journal Star](#). Parents would like to see a more detailed calendar listed on the website or in print. Parents like the photos of students on the website.

## **Next Parents' Council Meetings**

The dates of the Parents' Council meetings for the 2007-2008 academic year will be communicated in a letter mailed in the summer regarding continued membership on the Council.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Buss, Recorder