

Parents' Council Minutes October 6, 2007

In attendance: Cheri and Milo Anderson, Lori Anderson, Anne Ausdemore, Linda Baker, Charlie Barringer, Greg Bergt, Patricia Blusbaugh, Dick and Dianne Hatterman, Wendy Hestermann, Bonnie and Tim Hotz-McMahon, Karma Larsen, Cindy Lloyd, Stephanie Morse, Sue Outson, Kellie Stang, Sherrie Thiesen, Steve Viessman, Marsha Yeagley, Steve Weber, Julie Buss, Kathy Shellogg, and Sara Boatman

Introductions and President Ohles

President Ohles gave a brief welcome to the group and thanked them for their support to Nebraska Wesleyan and their students.

Sara Boatman asked those present to introduce themselves and talk briefly about their student(s) attending Wesleyan.

Parent Communication

Sara Boatman introduced Jen Muller, Web Coordinator, who talked to the group about the NWU website. She told the group about some comments and input she had received from parents earlier in the spring. She also talked about a new website look and material that will be coming in spring 2008. Jen directed the parents around the website and talked about some information they could find on particular pages. She specifically directed them to the page that had safety updates and security alerts so parents know where to go to get information regarding emergency situations on campus. Parents commented that the pages on the website aren't always current. Parents also want pages that they can navigate through easily especially if they aren't very computer savvy.

Sara Boatman broke the large group into two smaller groups; parents of first year students in one group and all other parents in the other group. Parents of the first year students discussed the communication pieces sent during the summer to all first year students. Parents found the information useful, but noted that the *Insights* seemed more like a marketing piece. Parents would like due dates on some forms. Parents believe some items should be sent to parents specifically and others to the student. They want a more detailed checklist with due dates of when to return all forms. They would like to see a combined health history and athletic health history form, so they don't have to fill out similar forms twice.

Parents in the second group discussed parent communication throughout the year. Some parents read *Parenthetically* and like the hard copy to carry around with them to show other prospective parents. Others thought that sending a postcard with a link to a webpage or sending the publication through an e-mail would be just as easy because they could print it out and take it with them. One thought was to have the ability to preference if parents would like to read it on-line or receive a hard copy. Parents had similar thoughts on the *Archways* publication. Many parents like the hard copy. Parents who are not alums would like the option to opt out after the first issue if they don't want to receive the publication. Parents like the *Parent Handbook* and some carry it with them for the entire college career of their student(s). Parents like the Parent Panel held during summer registration because new parents can make good connections with parents who have experience. Parents would like to receive

the dates of the Parent Panel as early as possible so they can plan to participate. Parents in this group also suggested that a letter to parents of sophomores be sent by the Vice President of Student Life in the fall which should include a listing of contact phone numbers, a reminder of the web address and where to find the *Parent Handbook* on line. Parents also like the magnet that is sent in the Parent Care Packet which is sent the fall of their student's first year. Parents like the *Challenge and Support* booklet. Parents would like postcards with event dates such as art exhibits in the Elder Gallery. Some parents aren't getting information regarding the Parent Care Packages that are available to send to their students during finals week. Parents would like a web form or button where they can change their permanent address.

Other Discussion Topics

Move-in

There were three new apartment buildings opened for housing upper-class students this fall. Only 5% of first year students are commuting from home this fall. Some parents expressed concern about the timing of Greek Recruitment for Sororities and would like to know if it could be held prior to the first week of classes. Sara Boatman responded by telling parents that New Student Orientation activities are important and that is the focus of those days prior to classes. Wesleyan staff is working with the Sororities regarding the recruitment process. Parents wanted to express their appreciation to the Greek chapters whose members helped first year students during move-in day.

Safety and Security

Sara Boatman distributed the Campus Security Act Annual Report. Sara Boatman reminded parents that their students could subscribe to the new Wesleyan security alert system so they can receive text messages if there is an emergency on the Wesleyan campus. She also discussed the Wesleyan Watch stickers that are given to students each year so that students can keep emergency numbers handy or program them into their cell phones. She told parents that off-duty police officers have been hired to patrol the campus during the day. These officers can ticket people if necessary. Sara Boatman assured parents that fire sprinklers have been installed in all the residential facilities that Wesleyan owns. A group continues to meet to help determine how to assist sprinkler installation in Greek Chapter houses. Donations to Greek organizations for fire safety are not tax deductible which makes raising the money challenging.

Residential campus issues

Sara Boatman gave a brief overview of the summary of Alcohol Edu results. First-year Wesleyan students take this survey regarding their beliefs and attitudes about alcohol.

Kathy Shellogg discussed a new program to help commuter students stay connected to campus. This year commuter students were connected with a residence hall floor and the peer assistant on that floor in hopes to retain this group of students who may be at high risk of not persisting to graduation if they do not make good connections. These commuter

students were given a FOB to gain access to their assigned building and computer lab. Some commuter students even joined their connected floor's intramural team.

Support for students' academic experience

Parents reported a scheduling issue with some students who registered later in the summer only being able to get Monday, Wednesday and Friday schedules. Apparently, all Tuesday and Thursday labs were filled before the last August registration date. Parents expressed concern that students didn't have classes two days their first semester.

Parents appreciate the friendly faculty who take the time to talk to students about issues. Parents suggest that all faculty use Blackboard to post grades so students can see where they are in the class if needed. Parents report that students enjoyed Visions and Ventures.

Parents would like some sort of on-line discussion group. This group can connect parents and they can discuss issues in parenting a college student(s).

Spring Parents' Council Meeting

The spring meeting of Parents' Council will be held April 12, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie E. Buss
Recorder