Quality of Life Committee’s

Report to the President

April, 2014

At the request of Dr. Catanese, the Quality of Life Committee met seven times within the 2013-2014 academic year to investigate, and make recommendations about, four quality-of-life areas: (1) Internationalization: Community focus and interests; (2) Housing Options; (3) Conference Center; and (4) Quality of Communication at FIT. Instead of creating separate subcommittees for each area, the Chair invited guest speakers in each area to different meetings, and the entire committee engaged in discussion about each topic. Each area is addressed separately below.

(1) Internationalization: Community focus and interests

This topic was discussed at the October 24, 2013 meeting (see minutes on QOL website) and was attended by guest speakers Dean Mary Beth Kenkel, from the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts, and Ms. Judith Brooke, Director of International Student and Scholar Services. Dean Kenkel is the Chair of the Internationalizing the Campus Committee (ICC), and she presented information about ICC’s vision, goals, and accomplishments since the committee’s inception in 2009. She discussed how the committee focuses on internationalization efforts within the university community. Ms. Brooke told about the number of initiatives hosted by her office to foster interactions between international and domestic students and to encourage involvement from the surrounding community.

Recommendations:
• Provide space to serve international students and to hold events, such as the proposed Conference Center.
• Hire more staff to help with administration of events and advertising.
• In order to involve the local community, use more centralized space, such as the Panther Dining patio area, for coffee hours or other social events.
• Focused advertising within the community is key. Advertise to local international community clubs and organizations to assist with supporting international students on campus.
• Invite speakers from the community and use international restaurants in the surrounding area to showcase their food.
• Host more international meal days at Panther Dining, possibly once/month to showcase different cultures. Advertise to community.
(2) Housing Options

This topic was discussed at the September 26, 2013 meeting (see minutes on QOL website) and was attended by guest speakers Mr. Greg Tsark, Vice President for Facilities Operations, and Mr. Greg Graham, Assistant Vice President for Business & Retail Operations. Mr. Graham presented the current status of housing, stating the total beds occupied this year are 1645, with 2013 beds available. Wood Hall was taken offline and neither Shaw nor Campbell Hall was at 100% capacity. Mr. Tsark spoke about housing possibilities and pointed out the need for both apartment-style living and traditional residence hall living spaces. Many of the upperclassmen, graduate students, and married students may prefer apartment-style living, but freshmen and sophomore want to uphold the traditional residential hall experiences, even in halls that include community bathrooms such as Robert’s Hall. Although it is still a desirable place to live, more stalls need to be added.

Recommendations:
For improvements to existing housing
• Existing Residence Quad should be painted, re-carpeted, and have windows replaced.
• Put healthier vending options in all housing
• New appliances in Residence Quad
• Standardized residence halls so student paying same fees get the same amenities in their rooms

For new housing
• Have community kitchens
• Affordable, traditional style dorms; NO cinder block construction, low ceilings, thin walls
• Consider lofting systems or bunk beds in traditional dorms

For extra amenities
• Resurrect optional commuter meal plan
• Create a better roommate selection survey
• Consider merit-based housing (higher GPA gains access to nicer rooms, etc.)

(3) Conference Center

This topic was discussed at the November 19, 2013 meeting (see minutes on QOL website) and was attended by guest speakers Mr. Greg Graham, Assistant Vice President for Business & Retail Operations, Ms. Erica Spencer, Director of Conference Service Bureau, and Ms. Cindy Schmitt, Senior Director of Continuing Education. Presenting together, Mr. Graham and Ms. Spencer provided a list of conference center facilities and amenities for consideration, based on their vast professional experiences in this area. Ms.
Schmitt, based on her vast experiences with Continuing Education initiatives, listed other priorities for consideration. These are listed in Appendix A, attached to this report.

Committee members responded with enthusiasm and expressed that a conference center could remedy “quality of life” situations that overburden existing facilities and amenities on campus. These include graduation events for high schools and Florida Tech, venues for use by student organizations and international students (coffee hours, BBQ during orientation, etc.), venues for use for professional conferences (which would relieve the burden on classroom and residence hall space in the summer), among others. Revenue could be generated by hosting external conferences and academic programs in hospitality services could be re-opened to partially staff the center.

**Recommendations:**

- The committee highly favors the idea of constructing a conference center and, although not meant to be an exhaustive list, they recommend the facilities and amenities provided in Appendix A. The committee emphasized the need for state of the art operations in order to ensure success of the center.
- The committee also recommends the development of an academic program (initially, a minor in Hospitality Management), using existing, successful programs at FIU, Cornell University, and Michigan State University as benchmarks.

(4) Quality of Communication at FIT

Communication at FIT should be smarter and more effective. This topic was discussed at the January 27, 2014 meeting (see minutes on QOL website) and was attended by guest speakers Dr. Joni Oglesby, Vice President for Support Services, Mr. Wes Sumner, Vice President for Marketing and Communication, and Ms. Cindy Schmitt, Senior Director for Continuing Education.

At the top level, Mr. Sumner presented a profile of what his office does to enhance communication both externally and internally. The Office of Marketing and Communication’s primary charge is to student recruitment and marketing of the university.

As the Director of Human Resources, Dr. Joni Oglesby stressed the importance of disseminating new and revised policies, especially those that have widespread impact on the daily functions of the institution. Managers and unit heads should be held accountable for dissemination, or lack thereof.

Ms. Cindy Schmitt was invited to speak about the Office of Continuing Education’s initiative to offer customer service training at the request of the Staff Advisory
Committee. She submitted a handout of “factors to consider” that are included as Appendix B.

Recommendations:

- The official source for all institutional news and information should be Florida Tech’s website. Therefore, regular maintenance and review of policies and webpages is paramount.
- Create communication flowcharts (personnel and procedures) to ensure we meet the Communication definition, “Right information to the right people at the right time.”
- Training for academic and administrative unit heads; accountability for lack of dissemination
- Mandatory communication of new (or changes to existing) policies and procedures
- Revise procedures for updating information on the web and in BANNER. For example
  - update information in “real time”, such as, changes in staff, titles, offices, phone numbers, etc.)
  - centralized mechanism for making information changes that effect every place it is published online
- Update antiquated methods with better use of technologies
- Promote more effective use of the Master Calendar
- For students, provide an event kiosk and/or allow advertisement of event in Panther Dining

This concludes the Spring 2014 Quality of Life President’s Report.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Monica H. Baloga, Chair
April 16, 2014
Appendix A

Conference Center:

Recommended Facilities and Amenities
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[(CE) means recommended for Continuing Education purpose]

• Large divisible ballroom
  The size would be critical since there are no large venues in Brevard County.
• Executive conference room complete with web collaboration capabilities, conference phone, etc.
• Break-out areas equipped with audio-visual capabilities for meetings, video-conferencing, virtual meetings and broadcasting, etc.
• Computer classroom (CE)
• Variety of classroom space to hold from 20 to 1,000 people that can be configured for size of class, complete with sound, projection, and other state of the art systems; onsite support throughout the event (CE)
• Collaboration and networking spaces (CE)
• Booth space that requires participants to pass through (CE)
• Adequate restroom facilities
• WiFi in entire facility
• Adjustable lighting
• Catering/kitchen area
• Sufficient storage, including event storage
• Auxiliary items, such as on-site dance floor
• Generator back up
• Housing for visiting scholars, professors, vendors (possibly junior suites)
• Small lobby and outdoor seating (to encourage networking)
• Transportation options
• Store for sundries and university merchandise
• Personnel: tech support, manager, desk staff, custodial service, event staff (set up/break down), catering staff, kitchen staff, etc.
• Dedicated space for university use
  For example, admissions staff could use space for meeting with parents and potential students.
• Recreation space, including pool, maybe a golf course
• More than adequate parking
• Competitive pricing (CE)
Appendix B

Communication Issues
Communication Issues

**Proposed Definition:** Right information, to the right people, at the right time

Factors to Consider:

1. **Is this a training or a process issue?**
   a. Business process or policy versus training on how we speak to each other
2. **How is it determined who needs to know?**
   a. Is it a hierarchy or collaborative environment?
      i. Don't know what they don't know
      ii. Assumptions
      iii. Telephone Game - gets watered down the more people it passes through
3. **How is the information communicated to these individuals?**
   a. Information overload.
      i. Relevant versus irrelevant
4. **What tools are available?**
   a. Meetings
      i. There are departments that do not have representation in meetings where information is communicated.
   b. Access Portal - Announcements
   c. Website - Policies
   d. FACFORUM - Emails
   e. Staff and Faculty email lists
   f. New Items
      i. SharePoint - Collaboration
      ii. Staff/Faculty newsletter focused on business processes and policy updates