

The Student Life Portfolio Reorganization: FY09 and Beyond

The FY09 Student Life Portfolio Reorganization is representative of a transformational change in the undergraduate experience. The action plan is focused on leveraging our current successes in the First-Year Experience, living and learning initiatives, and the arts in order to totally transform the overall student experience.

A new student life model has been developed that provides for experiential and community based clustered learning advocacy and support for students (CLASS). In essence, Residence Cluster Deans will be appointed to live-in the residence halls and facilitate the development of living and learning communities. They will also provide general outreach, counseling and experiential and community development programs.

In addition, Associate Deans for Off-Campus Student Living, and Fraternity & Sorority Affairs, will be appointed to ensure that residence life programs and services are readily available to all Rensselaer students. The new residence life model is focused on the care and welfare of all Rensselaer students and the support and development of community, regardless of where they live.

Class Deans will also be appointed and they will serve to compliment the residence life transformation. Each undergraduate class will have a Dean whose sole responsibility will be to build on the success of the First-Year Experience and create sustained pathways for personal growth and academic progression to culmination at graduation. The Class Dean will facilitate the reinforcement of affinity group development and class identity. In addition, a Dean for Graduate Students will be appointed to ensure that programs and services are provided for a growing graduate student body. With the increased emphasis on research and graduate education, it is imperative that special attention be devoted to the graduate student experience.

With the grand opening of EMPAC on the horizon, Student Life has increased the partnership with the EMPAC team to create more campus awareness and connection to this transformational venue. In addition, Student Life has embarked on a plan to develop a Student Life Arts initiative that will:

- generate new arts and signature programs
- develop marketing strategies to generate campus interest and support of Student Life Arts programs
- develop and implement revenue models to generate sustained support for new arts initiatives
- develop RFP's and outreach to promoters and arts organizations
- develop plans and programs to fully utilize campus facilities including the Union, the Houston Field House, and East Campus Athletics Village as performance platforms

Notes from April 30, 2008 Meeting of Greek Leaders with DOSO

Eddie's speech basically outlined three primary goals:

Note all of these items are not finalized!!!

- 1) Expanding the First Year Experience
 - a. Focus on a 95% retention rate (Currently 93%???)
 - b. Class Dean similar to Dartmouth
 - i. Mark Smith didn't work because he wasn't given the resources to perform the job. So the class dean for 2012 will have resources to provide enhanced programming for the students throughout their 4 years.

- 2) Living and Learning
 - a. Currently communities on campus but RPI will be expanding this idea into the full spectrum of Res. Life, greek life, and off campus housing.
 - b. Cluster Deans for residence halls to enhance the RA's. Deans will have a degree or experience that will be useful in their new position.
 - c. Add an associate dean for Greek Life to help with the living and learning community. Address the capital asset gap in living situations among Greeks and to make sure all properties are up to code. (ie: Not to have another Delts situation.) Provide an outreach for at risk students.
 - d. They also want to add a person for off campus housing to do the same as position above. Landlords who provide poor housing will not be recommended by the school for student housing.

- 3) Arts
 - a. School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (New Name) just celebrated 25 years.
 - b. Currently a lot of events for arts are held in the union. RPI wants to expand the locations. For example: dorms, EMPAC, JAVA++, Fieldhouse, Troy music hall....
 - c. 3 curators for Arts: Dance, Music, and Electronic Arts
 - d. Student Life EMPAC grand opening committee is planning events for the third weekend in Oct. which is Fall Weekend. This committee will continue on after opening weekend

Other topics:

Sophomore housing- It will be a ramp up program that requires sophomores to live in residence life. This will include Greek housing as well. They are talking about giving housing grants for students who agree to stay in residence halls. They are trying to figure out how to include Greek housing as well.

Best Western downtown is targeted for a 2009F opening.

They want to internationalize the student experience. This doesn't mean sending a student abroad for a semester. An example was the women's soccer team going to Europe for two weeks, volunteer work in another country, or actually studying abroad.

Notes from April 30, 2008 Meeting of Greek Leaders with DOSO

An endowment for Delts is in the works that includes both house improvements and scholarship. If people want more information, they should contact Mark Smith.

They have hired someone for Teri's position. Her name is Tara Schuster (???). She'll start sometime this month. They have also hired a psychiatrist which will start soon.

Lastly, Roger Mike asked to have someone from AIGC, Panhel, and IFC involved in the housing discussions. Eddie agreed it would be a good idea. It was stressed to get involved ASAP. To spread the word and ask questions before it was too late.

Other comments from this meeting:

Some old things were rehashed at the meeting. Much of the "old stuff" Jessica mentioned to Roger at the LXA reception after the meeting had to do with the February meeting at RSE. Dr. Knowles said he was surprised that there had been resistance to signing the letter that was to go out - they had plans to mail it to those who had received the first letter about two years ago and follow that up with an article in the Rensselaer Magazine. These plans were scrapped after the RSE meeting. (A press release however was put out to the Inside Rensselaer <http://www.rpi.edu/about/inside/issue/v2n4/index.html>, <http://www.rpi.edu/about/inside/issue/v2n4/relay.html>) The point was made that the reason Roger Grice, AIGC president, objected to signing it was because he had no hand in drafting it, which is a point Roger made at the RSE meeting (aside from the fact he didn't agree with all the points made). Mark said we had the opportunity to have input in the letter. It was mentioned that we only saw the letter that morning.

Another point made to them is that one of the lessons learned from the events of two years ago is the most efficient and effective way to get buy-in is to involve the various concerned parties from the beginning. It was suggested that we already had the structure in place with the three councils and we could have representation from each help with the development of his concept. That's when he stressed about getting involved as soon as possible - he then asked how many would be around this summer, and seven or eight hands went up. [I] think he was surprised at that and that we were ready and willing to get started right away.

It was Mark Smith who talked about spreading the word and having questions asked before it's too late. A comment was that questions will naturally come from the representatives attending the meetings once we get into the material and the real nuts and bolts of the operation. As we see how things develop, questions will arise, which is why we should be a part of the effort.