

Directors' Council General Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 21, 2021
Via Zoom

I. Welcome Remarks

New Member Welcome

Denise Robinson Lewis, Chair, Directors' Council

Denise welcomed the Council members to the meeting. On behalf of Kristen Evangelista, Membership and Engagement Chair, Denise welcomed new members: Ellen Caravella (Internal Auditor) and Niti Baldwin (Associate Budget Director).

II. DC Scholarship Update

Denise Robinson Lewis, Chair, Directors' Council

Since there were new members in attendance, Denise shared the process of a named scholarship. She indicated that whatever anyone gives will make a difference to the students. The Steering Committee is hopeful there will be another surplus this year. Having a surplus the last few years has been a foundation for the following year.

III. DC Elections Update

Don Bennett, Nominations Chair

Don indicated that the election process will be forthcoming via Qualtrics. There are currently no nominations for Chair. There are nominations for Vice Chair (Liana Fornarotto) and Secretary (Salwa Zito). The link will be sent out once the ballot is full and will include write-in capability.

Denise reiterated the need for new leadership. She also asked members to reach out to her with questions or concerns, especially if they think they do not have the time to make the commitment.

IV. Directors' Council Awards for 2020-2021

Don Bennett, Nominations Chair

Don shared that the nominations for end of the year awards for Innovation and Collaboration/Consideration would be open soon. A Qualtrics link will be set up to submit award nominations.

V. Overview Covid-19 Response Team and Vaccination Update

Dr. Jill Guzman, Director, Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center

Jill presented an overview of the work of the COVID Response Team. She thanked the DC members for their hard work and efforts for keeping the community safe so that in person activities were able to continue for students.

The group will be in place as long as there is a pandemic. She also thanked the Contact Tracing Team. With their efforts, they were able isolate all cases within 24 hours, which prevented large outbreaks.

They continue to follow local and state regulations, along with having an assigned epidemiologist from Passaic County.

She shared the following reminders:

- Vaccines are the way out the pandemic and everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated.
- The partnership with Atlantic Health continues. Employees can register and they will receive an email when vaccine appointments are available.
- They are also partnering with Atlantic Health to get vaccines for students.
- Update to the travel policy: anyone who is fully vaccinated does not need to quarantine; at the time of the meeting, the Daily Health Screening was still being updated.
- If an employee is fully vaccinated, quarantine is necessary only if they have symptoms. Exposure should be reported anyway for contact tracing purposes. The recommendations may change for certain individuals based on continued exposure.
- Rules for physical distancing are not being reduced at this time since there is still the possibility of transmission even if vaccinated.
- No decisions for the Fall have been decided yet. WP will submit a plan to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) this summer to determine the plan for Fall.
- The partnership with New Bridge Medical Center for COVID testing will continue through at least the Fall.

Questions from members about international travel and vaccine boosters:

- Non-essential travel is still discouraged. International travel is not recommended at this time; some countries are still in lockdown. Jonathan Lincoln is the contact for inquiries. A decision about Study Abroad was made but was not yet public information at the time of the meeting.
- Boosters will be suggested in accordance with the recommendations of the companies issuing the vaccines.

VI. Community Engagement Activities

Moderated by Liana Fornarotto, Directors' Council Vice Chair

Liana introduced the Community Engagement portion of the meeting. She indicated that the April meeting is a time for the DC to give back to the community and shared a picture of the Campus Clean Up activity from 2019. She also shared the previous activities such as snack bags for students during finals and personal care packages for the homeless.

Notes of encouragement/Inspiration to deployed WP military students

Silvia Barrera, Coordinator, Office of Veteran and Military Affairs, presented a summary of the active duty and Veteran students. The students usually come to campus and use the office space to get to know each and give each other support. With COVID, the office was mostly closed and they missed out on that experience. There are also some students

who were deployed to Washington, DC and will not return until after the semester ends. She is sending them gift bags of snacks and other items from WP.

Templates of a document, created by a graduate assistant for University Galleries, were provided to members so they could write inspiring messages to the active duty and veteran students. The documents could be emailed directly to Silvia. She will print them out to include in the care packages.

An updated copy of the template was sent after the meeting for members who may have issues with the document and/or missed the meeting.

While members worked on the document, Denise reminded everyone about the upcoming summer professional development opportunities in regards to training for the use of technology. Members do not have to wait as both the EAP and LinkedIn Learning have options for professional development

Notes of encouragement/inspiration to WP resident students

Liana shared that the Council wants to send an email to resident students before the end of the semester. She will coordinate with Becky Baird on distributing the email.

Christine Bravo will create an image with a “Word Cloud” of inspiring words provided by the Council members. Members took a few minutes to enter the words in the chat in Zoom.

The final image will be created post-meeting then sent to Liana for sending to the students.

Green League Initiatives Update

Special Guest: Kian Downes

Kian shared that students are trying to create a community garden in the unused garden space under the water tower. They are looking for employee volunteers to help during the summer and winter sessions when students are not regularly on campus.

The students hope to partner with the Pioneer Pantry and other community food banks to offer fresh produce grown in the garden.

Members interested in helping were asked to attend an event on Friday, April 23 at 12PM to meet the students. Once there are volunteers from the community, a schedule will be developed for maintaining the garden throughout the summer.

Kian also shared about the *Pioneer Food Pantry*

- Located in Room 325 in the Student Center
- Offers non-perishable food, toiletries, cleaning supplies, and masks/mask packets to students.
- Pick up hours are currently Monday and Thursday by appointment.
- The Pantry could use volunteers to help package orders and help with the pickup process.

- They would also appreciate donations of non-perishable foods such as soup, pasta, rice, and snacks.

Donna Minnich Spuhler, Director, Campus Activities, Service, and Leadership (CASL), shared about other events being held by the Green League and CASL:

- Campus Clean Up, student led event, on Thursday, April 22 at 12:30PM.
- Flag Planting tribute for those who have been effected by COVID on Thursday, April 22 and Friday, April 23 from 12:30PM to 2PM.

Members inquired about a clothing and/or toy drive. For both, there are concerns with COVID and finding a place willing to accept donations. The drives may be considered for the Fall if CASL can find agencies that will accept the items.

DC General Membership Share-Out

Liana asked members to share activities they have been doing for the community, either personally or professionally.

Yolany Gonell thanked the community for acknowledging the racial trauma that occurred over the last year. She indicated that President Helldobler would be releasing a message about the verdict in the George Floyd case.

David Jones indicated that it would be helpful for managers to acknowledge that the people they supervise, including student employees, would appreciate flex time, when needed, for decompression or well-being when these types of events occur. He offered his support to DC members, if needed.

They shared there was a student focused event the evening of this DC meeting, which would be a place for students to discuss the verdict.

David also announced that the final Community Dialogue event of the semester would be occurring the same day as this meeting. The monthly conversations will resume in the Fall.

Jill Guzman indicated that DC members should be aware that these matters might impact the schoolwork of some students. Members should continue to be supportive and remind students of the services such as the Student Success Team and the Residence Life staff. Referrals will help students to finish out their semester and graduate on time.

Denise acknowledged the shift in the conversation and indicated that it is evidence of the group being willing to pivot the focus and address topics of the moment.

VII. Announcements

Announcements were shared in the chat in Zoom and would be sent out via email, along with the survey link for member feedback.

VIII. Adjournment