Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Noon-2 p.m. Friday, November 4th, 2011

Present: S. Costabile (parent), M. Costabile (parent), M. Costabile (sibling), L. Barnett (parent), K. Scheuermann (parent), L. Rattray (parent), A. Hintz (BASC Representative), D. Bagley (Residential Life), D. Dwyer (School of Education & Human Services), L. Caruso (Health Center), S. Atkinson (Enrollment Services), M. Esler (Student Retention), L. Cook (Biology Professor), D. Ryan (Student Accounts), K. Cere (Senior), A. Newman (First-year Experience), C. Rattray (first-year student), H. Scheuermann (first-year student).

Transportation to and from campus: S. Costabile noticed Eagle Run schedule offers transportation on November 22 (last day of classes before Thanksgiving break) before classes are over. Do students sign up for it? No. Can they sign up for an additional bus run later? Should they increase the amount of runs the shuttles do, use sign-up sheets? Try to share a cab?

Taxi service from Brockport to the airport costs students around $65. Parents are not comfortable when their children have to rely on others to get them to the airport, bus or train stations.

Transportation options for students traveling a distance:

1. Rideshare Program (online ride board)
2. Taxi On Demand (prepaid card for private taxi services)
3. RGRTA (Rochester Genesee Regional Transit Authority). It runs often during the week, less often on weekends. Schedule on Parking’s Web site (brockport.edu/parking)
4. BSG bus to Long Island before and after Thanksgiving and Winter breaks ($95 round trip)
5. “Twilight Taxi” (local taxi service). A. Newman will find out their rates and post it on the Parent site (brockport.edu/parents)

Wednesday before Thanksgiving break is a better time for a shuttle (S. Costabile). M. Esler asked if it was possible for the shuttle to make multiple runs. D. Bagley reported that some residence halls are closed during breaks, but not all. Most students leave by dinnertime the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.

S. Costabile’s suggestions:

- Offer a shuttle the Friday evening (beginning of Midterm break)
- Offer a shuttle around dinnertime on the Tuesday Thanksgiving Break begins.

A. Hintz will ask J. Frosini (director of Parking Services) to provide shuttle transportation. The shuttle is funded by the mandatory student fee. M. Esler suggested the College streamline the info even more so it is all in one place.
Parent perception of the commuter experience:

K. Scheuermann’s two daughters commute 29.5 miles from Rush to campus. Many things are set up well for commuters. Meeting times for Honors Peer Mentoring was a problem in the beginning of the semester (original Peer Mentor meeting was at 9 p.m. Mondays), but student changed to a different group that meets at 6 p.m. on Mondays instead. Peer Mentor meetings for Honors students are required. Honors office has been very responsive to her needs as a commuter. K. Scheuermann suggested identifying commuters and put them in the same Peer Mentoring group. She also complimented the guest/day parking passes. They can park close to classes and the Union. $4/day is a reasonable amount. Parking is not a problem here. There is always a spot to park in lots T and V.

L. Rattray (from Syracuse) thought her daughter didn’t need a car on campus as a freshman. She hasn’t needed one yet.

Parent perception of the residential experience:

L. Rattray said it has been great. Her daughter is acclimating to life in the residence halls. Her daughter’s neighbors are loud, stay up late. An RA responded to the situation. Her daughter says she loves the food. They plan to eat at Harrison for dinner tonight (mom and daughter). She sees other parents there too.

S. Costabile: MacVicar Hall is beautiful. They are very pleased. Move-in day is a pleasure here. Communication regarding move-in was great. Kudos to whoever is in charge. The students helping out were great. A big THANK YOU!! D. Bagley reported that move-in is a campus-wide effort led by Facilities.

Tip for families: L. Rattray suggested having roommates coordinate moving in a couple hours apart so they could individually have the room to themselves to get things settled. The Class of 2015 Facebook page was very active over the summer. Posting schedules and move-in information on it was helpful.

H. Scheuermann (first-year student): Schedule for Summer Orientation was interesting. The program didn’t necessarily appeal to commuters. She was confused about what meetings were “required” and which were “optional” and at what point the commuters were able to go home on the first day.

L. Rattray: the Townhomes are beautiful (her daughter already said she wants to live there!) Nice to have parents stay there during orientation. Open discussion for parents in the evening at the Townhomes was well-attended. She liked the opportunity to connect with other parents. There is a lot of information on the Web site over the summer, but it takes time to look it up. The postcard telling them to go online for Welcome Week information was helpful.

How have classes been going? How were midterms for your students?

L. Rattray commented that her daughter is still struggling in one of her general education courses. There are only a few graded assignments. D. Dwyer asked if her daughter has spoken to her APS instructor about her concerns. L. Rattray: yes. She’s going to Student Learning Center (SLC) for tutoring, but at week ten she should...
she still be having an issue?  D. Dwyer: students are very concerned about grades and the adjustment from high school can be difficult. Earning a “C” is OK; it won’t irreparably damage a student’s GPA. In the meantime, new freshmen are learning invaluable problem-solving skills. In the beginning of students’ college experiences, it may be hard to deal with. M. Costabile (sibling) commented that students do put pressure on themselves. K. Cere agreed. She is guilty of putting pressure on herself about earning good grades. The vital role of parents is to encourage and continue to support their students throughout, even if they change majors.

One student’s English class met in the SLC to help introduce them to the area and services, which was helpful. Another student’s APS class met in the SLC. A parent commented that she thought new students are less likely to go to the SLC or library on their own, so it is nice when instructors/advisors encourage this, especially during the first semester; the earlier in the semester the better.

L. Rattray’s daughter is the last group to register. Can she e-mail professors if the classes she needs are full? L. Cook: Yes. Registering can be a source of stress for freshmen (because they are the last group to register), but it gets better each semester. L. Cook advises her students to have a backup schedule just in case.

M. Esler mentioned that the online registration schedule is ever-changing until the beginning of next semester. There is also a purge date in January where the College removes students who owe money from classes, have been academically dismissed or have failed to affirm their enrollment. This frees up some seats. S. Atkinson reported that the College is working on implementing an electronic waitlist for classes that fill. As seats open up, the first person on list would receive an email. They would have 48 hours to claim the seat.

Last fall, K. Cere went to professor’s office to ask permission to get into a class that was full. She maintained communication throughout break and ultimately got into the class.

L. Cook had a list of freshmen who needed to get into specific classes for the Biology major. She doesn’t know if any other majors do the same for their students.

K. Rattray asked if freshmen keep their APS instructor as an academic advisor after the current semester. D. Dwyer and L. Cook reported that each department handles it differently.

In your opinion, is Brockport a safe campus?

H. Scheuermann (student) thinks it is. When she’s staying late on campus, she feels safe. There are Blue Lights all over campus and it’s well-lit. Liked how freshmen were instructed to program the emergency and non-emergency numbers into their phones at Summer Orientation.

C. Rattray (student) walked twice at night alone on campus (through tunnel from Tuttle to her residence hall). She stayed on the phone with her mom the whole time.
S. Costabile also believes the campus is very safe. She is not concerned about her daughter’s safety.

A parent asked about mental health problems. Are they common? Does the school provide assistance with coping with stress?

L. Caruso reported that the Counseling Center on campus sees more seniors than freshmen. Around mid-October they notice many students they treat are not sleeping well, may have several issues: partying, grades, pressure to be in a different major, etc. Some are long-term problems coming to fruition while they’re here.

M. Esler asked the parents if their students seemed different when they came home over break. Parents: Not really. L. Rattray’s daughter got a taste of freedom when she came home from break. Rules were a little different.

S. Costabile commented that her daughter is rather independent. Brockport’s breaks don’t coincide with other college breaks so there weren’t a lot of friends around in mid-October. Thanksgiving will be a different story.

K. Cere commented from a mentor and student perspective: she encourages her freshmen to go to the Counseling Center. She experienced a lot of anxiety about getting into the Nursing program. She noticed that her freshman students (mentees) e-mailed her during the October break with a lot of questions. She suggested that parents continue to encourage students to pursue the major they are interested in.

The College’s new Early Warning System:

M. Esler introduced the College’s new Early Alert System to the Council. This fall, 78% of first year students took an Early Warning Advisement Questionnaire beginning at week three of the semester. If students responded to a question indicating they were having a problem (need tutoring, not getting much out of assigned readings, problems with roommates, have financial concerns, etc.), an e-mail was generated with suggestions about how to deal with the problem. The report will help the College to more strategically approach issues/problems with students.

L. Cook commented that many students report they don’t read emails! In the professional world: emailing is main source of communication. Students prefer texting over e-mailing.

Some results from the EWS:

- 42% of students said they need a tutor in one or more of their classes
- Very few reported they were partying too much
- Over 20% said they were homesick
- Not surprisingly: the students who didn’t fill out the surveys had a lower mid-term GPA. Overall, there is a correlation between GPA and how they responded to the questions.
There’s also a faculty component to the system where faculty can submit alerts if they’re not attending class, not turning in homework, or doing poorly. Faculty can also submit comments.

L. Cook reports: If students hear a warning from instructors and the Student Retention office, they respond differently. It has already saved at least three people that she is aware of. D. Bagley: interventions are happening across campus, including residence halls.

General Comments:

S. Costabile loves the Family Calendar. She appreciates having important dates and the tips in one convenient place. She’s on Facebook, but didn’t know about the Listserv.

Suggestions for next Parent Council Meeting:

1. Offer an online forum
2. Make the meeting time later in the day

Next Parent Council Meeting: Wednesday, December 14. Please e-mail anewman@brockport.edu for more information or to sign up.