

Meeting Minutes for SEAC: 10/8/2014

Present:

Bob Graf rgraf@macalester.edu (guest speaker)
Peggy Mereness <mereness@macalester.edu>,
Stephanie Alden <salden@macalester.edu>,
Mark Bechtel <mbechtel@macalester.edu>,
Suzanne Burr <sburr@macalester.edu>,
Harrisonford Fauni <hfauni@macalester.edu>,
Indra Halvorsone <ihalvors@macalester.edu>,
Stephanie Mulcahey <smulcahe@macalester.edu>,
Nadine Penkovsky <npenkovs@macalester.edu>,
Brenda Piatz <piatz@macalester.edu>,
Diana Rosenzweig <drosenzw@macalester.edu>,
Jenae Schmidt <schmidtj@macalester.edu>,
Denise Tyburski <tyburski@macalester.edu>

Absent: Karla Nagy knagy@macalester.edu (due to International Roundtable Obligations)

Bob Graf was a guest at our meeting today – to speak to us about minimum wage changes with student employment. He reinforced the memo that he sent at the start of the semester and discussed the reasons the college had for holding off on making changes to the student employment pay rates. The reasons given included:

- Timing of the bill being passed-during the summer, after student work study award had been granted, when students and many staff and faculty were not on campus.
- Bob wants to take this as an opportunity to step back and evaluate the entire system to make a more purposeful process. Items he wants to examine include
 - Administration of student employment (they have 10-12 rates of pay)
 - Six Steps to Educational Success into consideration as part of this process
 - Budget perspective – relation between financial aid and student employment
 - Position change: Api Sulestiyo resigned, new position for Peggy Mereness
 - Minimum wage will continue to increase each year – plan for accommodating this

Questions from SEAC to Bob:

Mark B – timeline for answers to our questions re: payrate increases?

A: No timeframe in place, but wants to get going (especially now that Peggy has made the transition into her new position). Hopes that it won't take a year. If cultural/philosophical change to Student Employment – these types of discussions will take longer

Jenae S. reminded us that Financial Aid will be awarding prospective students aid packages beginning in November! We need to get working on this.

Nadine – Students are going through their award more quickly because of payrate increase – how is college going to deal with this issue? Can financial aid increase student packages during mid-

year – Jenae said they are very strict about this, but continues to be a dilemma. There is no short-term solution for this problem.

Paying more money to students is one solution/doing things differently so that they aren't hiring as many hours/students is another solution/

Plan for moving forward. Bob would like to form a group with Provost, Financial Aid, and members of SEAC to be on this committee and work ad hoc to come up with a plan. ? – include students, and Bob said that sounded like a good idea.

Harrisonford asked about incentives for supervisors to complete Performance Reviews if there are no pay incentives for completing them. Bob made the comment that it is hard to require these tasks on campus – this is not the way our work environment functions @ Macalester.

Another question – what happens to the extra hours that students are not able to work because of the payrate increase. Bob doesn't have an answer to this question. i.e. do students just work less hours because their awards have not increased, so therefore we need to hire more students (potentially non work-study students) to fill the need. Or can we actually increase students financial aid awards so they can work more hours.

Jesse: Comment from ITS department – problem if financial awards don't increase to counteract the increase the financial increase in the minimum wage. Students are working less hours, and skill sets are decreasing because they aren't on the job as much.

General Discussion Notes:

Indra would like us to make some college-wide communication regarding plans/timetables for payrate changes. Email would be useful. We should also inform students as well as staff/faculty supervisors.

We do post minutes on SEAC website – but it has not been updated for a long time since Oct. 2013. Maybe we could post FAQ's about the plan for changing payrate scale.

Diana is reporting that she is working more hours than she is able to based on her award because things have to get done in her job, regardless of her award. This is NOT something we want students to feel that they should do (according to Peggy).

Who to ask about questions: Financial Aid or Student Employment?

In certain situations students have jobs they have to work hours to cover.

Jenae – students with Tier 1 jobs have to work one hour less/week (68% of students were below minimum wage rate when it changed). As pay rate goes up every year, this will compound the problem.

Mark is emphasizing need to communicate with college supervisors – that they need to be aware that students may go through their awards too quickly this year.

Bob asked SEAC members if tracking reports are useful for supervisors. Jesse said the library made up a spreadsheet which calculates for students how many hours/week they should work for the rest of the term to use up their first award.

Timeframe for this committee – discussion: 2 staff employees from SEAC, 2 students (perhaps the ones on SEAC) to work with Peggy, Jenae, Bob, others from Financial Aid on this committee to

Jenae – if we are going to talk about increasing award amount for next year, she needs a decision by the end of November 2014. There is more time for the returning students.

Jesse is advocating that some communication go out (through the Piper) to students letting them know we are working on this issue. Mark says we should send this info first to the supervisors. Combine this message to student supervisors reminding them to keep tabs on students awards running out before the end of the semester.

Suzanne B – brought up concerns about student learning objectives vs. jobs created on campus that may not be best utilizing time. Jesse emphasized that SEAC is the forum for us to share with each other and then share with the college-wide community.

Actions from last month:

- Peggy and Jesse have checked – we have enough members (Karla Nagy)
- Calendar invites – done
- Peggy provided timeline for SEOTY award timelines
- Stephanie M. talked to Sara Sueflow about website updates
- Last action item was talking about pay rate changes
- Piper notice – Jesse was wondering if it was in the Piper – he will resubmit, because we don't think it was published.

Action Items from this meeting:

- Jesse will share with SEAC members the spreadsheet that the library created to help track students use of their work study awards over the course of each semester.
- Pick a co-chair – need someone who is third year – Stephanie M. said she would do this.
- Combo Committee: Student Learning Objectives of the college combined with Minimum Wage Increases. No date set for first meeting.
 - ✓ Nadine Penkovsky and Harrisonford (student rep's)
 - ✓ Mark Bechtel and Stephanie Alden (from SEAC)
 - ✓ Other campus-wide members include: Bob Graf, Peggy Mereness, Jenae Schmidt (more names possible)