



*The University of Western Ontario
Orientation Planning Committee*

Meeting

*Wednesday August 5th, 2015
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.*

In Attendance:

Lesley Mounteer	Courtney McDonald	Chris Alleyne
Alana Stevenson	Rich Caccamo	Peggy Wakabayashi
Jared Boland	Cassie Anton	Doreen Vautour
Fabiana Tepedino	Anooshae Janmohammad	Gwen Lowrie-Dennis
Tolu Kayode	Eddy Avila	
Caitie Cheeseman	Papy Abdie	

Regrets:

Stef Wisofschi	Josh Clark	Taryn Scripnick
Hein Ngo	Folawiyo Laditi	
Mike Bartlett	Frank Inglis	

Location: UCC conference room 369

Chair: Peggy Wakabayashi

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm.

Agenda

- Courtney requested that the co-curricular record be added to the agenda for discussion.

Working Group Updates

Training

- Eddy noted that the Training Working Group has been working on finalizing the Pre-O-Week Soph Training based on the outline that has already been created.
- The Mental Health Module has been sent out to Sophs, and it is mandatory to complete as part of Soph training.
- Jared has been working on making an Inter-Cultural Communication Module that will be tested out this year (it has already been successfully completed by 42 Sophs)
 - This module is listed as supplementary, although it may be considered mandatory next year.
- A request to miss training form has been sent out; any Sophs that miss training must consult with Rich and their Head Soph before obtaining a wristband.

Programming

- Eddy mentioned that programming has been very active and has gone through the list of ideas and talent so that Josh can begin booking
- Western's Orientation concert headliners have been announced today, and Walk Off the Earth with LIGHTS will be playing the Saturday night concert.
- There has been collaboration amongst the O-Team and USC in order to sync the schedule of social media information releases.

Promotions and Marketing – Western Wednesday's

- Western Wednesday is a new promotion initiative, and we will be unlocking an event in the posted O-Week schedule each Wednesday at noon.
- Eddy noted that Josh is working on booking performers for a variety show (so far: Mike Domitrz and Mike Mandel), which will be released as the next Western Wednesday promotion.
- An EDM concert will be promoted the week after, and One Love will be promoted the week following it.
- Q: Lesley asked if the promotional content goes on twitter immediately after it has been released.
- A: Eddy clarified that the Western Wednesday posts are uploaded to twitter, Facebook and Guidebook at noon, and will appear immediately.

Accessibility

- Fabiana noted that the group talked about multi-faith space – and noted that there is only the Muslim prayer space available at the moment.
- **ACTION:** Information on multi-faith spaces will be posted to Guidebook.
- The Accessibility minutes are posted on OWL and available to the group to refer to.
- **Reminder:** OPC was reminded that if they would like to see any specific resources added to Guidebook, they could send them to Gwen at opintern@uwo.ca.

- Papy noted that many Sophs still do not use Guidebook, and that it is important that they sit down with their teams and go through it.
- Rich noted that there has been time set aside during Soph Training to do a full review of Guidebook.
- Eddy noted that he has been working with Nina Joyce toward booking organizing accessibility vans and that the information relevant to them will be posted on Guidebook.
- Peggy noted that the group did not delve into financial accessibility, and told OPC to let the Accessibility Working Group know if there were Accessibility issues they felt should still be discussed.

Assessment

- Rich reached out to Rick Ezekiel who is on the Orientation Strategic Planning Committee regarding the Post-O-Week assessment.
- There is a plan to merge survey questions based on the Orientation Planning Summit with the Post-O-Week survey this year so that efforts are not duplicated.

Approvals

- Jared noted that the FIMS and MedSyd designs from the last OPC meeting were resubmitted and approved by a smaller group.

For Information

Language Awareness Campaign Materials – *presented by Papy Abdie*

- Currently, all the statements that will be printed on the posters have been solidified. Papy noted that the statements have been filtered through friends, staff and faculty.
- **ACTION:** Gwen to circulate Language Awareness Campaign Materials document to OPC for feedback.
- Noted that some of the language was academic, but felt that it was important in order to give an adequate explanation as to why the words were harmful.
 - Have also provided simplified versions of the statements to help with language accessibility.
- The posters provide blatant explanations as to why popular language was inappropriate, and they decided to use regular, non-bolded text for everything to let the words speak for themselves.
- The poster samples included photos of Sophs with language awareness slogans written beside them. Some of the posters were black and white while some had a purple tint.
- Considered adding a trigger warning to the poster, but felt that it would look too busy, so instead Sophs will be mandated to give trigger warnings and let their first-year students know about resources.
- Q: Peggy asked who wrote the tag lines.

- A: Papy clarified that she wrote them herself, and then ran them by other parties for comment.
- **CONDENSUS** The group agreed that the black and white posters looked more impactful than the purple posters for the Language Awareness Campaign. The landscape view was also favoured as it left more room to write phrases without covering the photo on the poster.
- Q: Tolu asked how many phrases were included in the campaign.
- A: Papy noted that there were 200 photos, although some of the words used were repeated.
- This campaign is intended for social media and there is a video being produced to be shown at One Love; there is also going to be a Facebook link created.
- **ACTION:** Papy will send Fabiana the Facebook link for the Language Awareness Campaign to post online for International Students without Facebook.
- Chris noted that only one or two logos should be used in the corner of the poster to keep it looking simple – as opposed to the Western Orientation, USC, and One Love logos.
- Q: Lesley asked why the One Love logo was on the poster.
- A: Papy noted that the posters were originally designed for One Love and went well with the theme.

For Discussion

Uniform Policy Guidelines

- Peggy noted that she wanted the language of the policy to be broad, and that it should generally position Soph uniforms as a reflection of the university as a whole over the reflection of individual Soph teams.
- [REDACTED] Doreen noted that more culturally significant items should be included in the uniform policy, instead of making the focus specific.
- [REDACTED] insert the wording: “is included but not limited to” in order to broaden the uniform policy. Specifics can be provided as examples.
- **Suggestions include:** Turbans, Hijabs, Mohawks, Dreadlocks, Native Headdresses, and any other cultural or religious symbols.

Background Information: MedSyd Soph team feedback – *presented by Alana*

- Alana clarified that this submission was sent in by Mary (the MedSyd Head Soph) in order to give her account after hearing about the potential upcoming amendments.
- Peggy noted that MedSyd’s submission focused on the idea that the hair was just used for fun, but that it was important to draw the line somewhere.
- Peggy noted that this has been done for about 5 years.
- Caitie noted that she thought the feedback was a bit ‘flip-floppy’ and that the protection of black culture was more important than this specific uniform tradition.

- Jared pointed out the difference between a costume and a real hairstyle, and felt that because the dreadlocks were being used as a costume, it made them more susceptible to appropriation.
- Papy felt that dreadlocks were more subtly appropriative but just as significant, and for that reason she thought they should not be allowed, despite MedSyd's efforts making their wigs.
- Lesley noted that there are other ways to differentiate Soph teams besides colourful hair.
- Eddy noted that the hair is an informal accessory, and has not been approved by OPC at any point.
- Cassie noted that the two main arguments of the appeal (1. the dreadlocks make the Sophs easier to find and 2. the dreadlocks encourage an atmosphere that is non-judgmental of appearance) were not valid arguments to keep the uniform accessory, and that the dreadlocks perhaps did not encourage inclusivity.
- Cassie noted that she appreciated the Soph team's effort to recognize the cultural significance, and pointed out that the line between appropriation and celebration can be hard to find.
- Q: Courtney asked if this issue has been addressed before and if it would be a surprise to Sophs.
- A: Peggy did not recall the dreadlocked hair being discussed lately.
- [REDACTED] Peggy noted that a compromise can most likely be made in terms of MedSyd using colourful hair to distinguish themselves.
- Q: Doreen asked if fake hair and braids could be used.
- A: The group agreed that other synthetic hairstyles may be inclusive.
- Caitie noted that the point of the Sophing program was that students could approach any Soph, regardless of their constituency or uniform.
- Jared touched on appropriation vs. celebration – noted that appreciating the cultural significance of the dreadlocks may be unobtainable in comparison to the education done with Henna tattoos used during Orientation.
- Q: Peggy asked who is going to police the fake hair use.
- A: Eddy and Rich volunteered.
- [REDACTED] Papy suggested that braids not be allowed, noting that hair does not bring anything to the uniform and that it is important to draw a clear line.
- Rich noted a conversation that was had with MedSyd after approving cheers: MedSyd was told that dreadlocks were an issue that may be up for debate back in March.
- Rich noted that the point was not to avoid upsetting MedSyd but the point was to keep first-year students from feeling culturally offended.
- [REDACTED] cover the use of Mohawks in the uniform policy as well.
- Jared noted that the problem originated when a Soph messaged him voicing discomfort and concerns about MedSyd's dreadlocks.
- Q: Lesley asked if coloured hair would be a good compromise.
- A: Rich noted that he had no problem with coloured hair.

- Lesley noted that she felt the group knew dreadlocks were inappropriate and that they should not be allowed.
- **CONSENSUS:** Dreadlocks will ultimately not be allowed to be worn as part of Soph uniforms.
- Tolu noted that the specific word “dreadlock” was a problem for him, as it is associated heavily with the Rastafarian religion.
- Gwen noted that dreadlocks are considered sacred in many religions and are also worn as a politically expressive symbol for some.
- [REDACTED] Caitie suggested OPC give MedSyd some time to decide on a compromise to their current uniform accessories.
- Q: Courtney asked if Sophs are educated on cultural appropriation and the approval process moving forward.
- A: Peggy noted that Sophs should be trained early in terms of cultural awareness.
- Doreen noted that the process of developing culturally inclusive policy is a constant evolution, and that the way society perceives information has changed significantly in the past decade.
- Eddy felt that many Sophs would be grateful if this policy was enacted, but that it is important to explain it and shine a light on the explanation.
- Peggy noted that overall Orientation is about creating a welcoming experience for first-year students.
- Q: Cassie inquired about “Faux-hawks”.
- **CONSENSUS:** The group agreed that Mohawks were more offensive, and “fauxhawks” are okay.
- Doreen noted that there is a significant difference between students’ chosen hair style that they wear year-round and a team’s uniform.
- **CONSENSUS:** The group agreed that we will not be enforcing this policy in terms of individuals sporting real dreadlocks based on personal preference.
- **ACTION:** A smaller group will respond to MedSyd’s feedback to relay the decision of OPC.

New Business

Co-Curricular Record

- Courtney noted that she is curious as to how OPC will be identifying which Orientation events are certified to count as part of a student’s co-curricular record.
- Courtney asked if there is a way to specify this information on Guidebook.
- This is the third year of the co-curricular record.
- There is a deadline for students to submit approved activities about 6 weeks after Orientation.
- There are some O-Week events that qualify, and the criteria is posted on the Western website
- Q: What O-Week events would qualify?

- A: The group is unsure, but most O-Month events would qualify.
- Qualifying activities should have measurable learning outcomes that result.
- The group decided that One Love should not qualify for the co-curricular record.
- [REDACTED] Chris suggested reminding administrators of the O-Month events that some may qualify for the co-curricular record.
- Rich noted that part of the responsibility in regards to the co-curricular record lies with the administrators of events, and that once it has been determined which events will apply they can be easily promoted on Guidebook.
- Rich encouraged anyone who felt an O-Week event qualifies for co-curricular record to reach out so it can be promoted on Guidebook.
- **ACTION:** Gwen to get the co-curricular record logo and attach it to all Guidebook events that apply.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday August 19th at 2:00 pm in UCC conference room 369.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Summary of Key Items

- **ACTION:** Information on multi-faith spaces will be posted to Guidebook.
- **ACTION:** Papy will send Fabiana the Facebook link for the Language Awareness Campaign to post online for International Students without Facebook.
- **ACTION:** Gwen to circulate Language Awareness Campaign Materials document to OPC for feedback.
- **ACTION:** A smaller group will respond to MedSyd's feedback to relay the decision of OPC.
- **ACTION:** Gwen to get the co-curricular record logo and attach it to all Guidebook events that apply.
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