

College Faculty Council – Student Affairs Subcommittee (UFC Student Affairs & Campus Life Advisory Committee)

Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2026

Committee Members and Student Representatives Present

- Ashe Laughlin (Chair; Assistant Professor of Painting & Drawing)
- Melissa Jones (Dean of Students / Associate VP for Student Affairs, ex officio)
- Mike Walsh (Vice President for Student Affairs, ex officio)
- Randall Reif (Associate Professor, Chemistry & Physics)
- Sushma Subramanian (Associate Professor, Communication & Digital Studies)
- Antonia Delgado-Poust (Associate Professor, Modern Languages & Literatures; Co-Secretary)
- Maya Schram (Conservation Biology and Environmental Science; student representative)
- Mackenzie Martin (Studio Art; student representative)

Discussion Topics

1. Strategic Plan Discussion

The committee discussed elements of the University's Strategic Plan, with a particular emphasis on Priority 3 and how proposed initiatives will be funded. Members reflected on the potential impact—both financial and non-financial—on students, staff, and faculty.

Ideas surfaced for how SACL might meaningfully support these priorities, including:

- Assisting with small-scale campus improvements (e.g., cleaning windows, general beautification or maintenance efforts).
- Considering additions that promote community-building, such as picnic tables and other inviting outdoor spaces.
- Identifying effective unifying campus events that draw students together.

Additional questions raised included:

- How can we create more opportunities for students from different colleges to interact?
- How do we encourage in-person engagement in a post-COVID environment where isolation has become normalized?
- What “third spaces” on campus can be cultivated to encourage casual gathering and student-to-student connection?

2. Student Engagement and Programming

The group reviewed current programming strategies and brainstormed new approaches to increase student engagement and visibility.

Successful Strategies / Insights

- FOMO is a major motivator for student turnout; high-energy, visible, and consistent programming tends to be most successful.
- Large anchor events like Rocktoberfest, Devil Goat Day, Big Ash Bonfire, Club Carnival, and Big Bingo have strong student draw.
- Incentives such as prizes, free food, giveaways, exclusive access, and special opportunities (e.g., a dinner with the Dean of Students) are effective.

Future Programming Ideas

- Create a printed calendar of social events for easy student/faculty access.
- Offer events with a faux attendance cap (e.g., “first 50 students receive a t-shirt”) to enhance excitement and exclusivity.
- Experiment with post-event storytelling to generate buzz and future FOMO, ensuring social media and campus publications highlight what students missed.
- Ensure flyers are removed promptly after events to reduce the quantity of outdated materials (which can, inadvertently, send the undesired message of neglect).

Communication Strategies

- Strengthen collaborations with student media such as *The Weekly Ringer* to:
 - Promote events more effectively.
 - Ensure coverage afterward to build campus culture and visibility.
- Explore improved or more centrally located workspace for the newspaper staff to enhance engagement and access.

3. Student Representation and Focus Groups

The committee discussed ways to increase student voices in SACL’s work.

Ideas and Action Points

- Invite SGA representatives to attend future SACL meetings or hold an informal conversation session.
- Ask Melissa Jones about identifying appropriate SGA representatives for committee involvement.
- Host student focus groups on programming, using non-traditional invitations—e.g., embossed letters, “golden tickets,” or outreach beyond email.
- Aim for a diverse cross-section of students when recruiting focus group participants.
- Consider inviting one outside guest per semester, aligned with specific campus needs or topic relevance, to talk about their work with the committee.

4. Campus Spaces and Facilities

Committee members discussed the importance of accessible and appealing spaces where students can gather, collaborate, and feel connected.

Topics included:

- Need for more active student clubs to have usable space.
- Possibility of relocating the student newspaper to a more central location to encourage collaboration and visibility.
- Campus walkthroughs by Melissa and April Wynn over Spring Break in which they assessed various necessary improvements and areas of focus (related, but not limited, to aesthetics).

5. Planning for Next Semester

Looking ahead, the committee expressed interest in:

- Making student focus groups a major focus for Fall meetings.
- Continuing discussions about leadership transitions and ensuring continuity of initiatives.

6. Next Steps

- Melissa will reach out to the new SGA President to request student suggestions for committee representation.
- Committee members will continue brainstorming upcoming events, meeting structures, and priorities via an email thread.
- Planning for one significant guest speaker per semester will resume once next semester's needs are clearer.
- We may try to meet one last time in April.