



MEMORANDUM

From Leon C. Skornicki, SBA President; and,
Sam Arora, SBA Day Vice-President.
To T. Alexander Aleinikoff, Dean & Executive Vice-President.
Mitchell Bailin, Dean of Students, Georgetown Law.
Dana Onorato, Director of Student Life
Re Georgetown Law Student Faculty Committees.
Date January 26, 2009.

In March, 2008, Dean Aleinikoff had a meeting with the then-newly elected Student Bar Association (SBA) President and Evening Vice-President. In that meeting, among other things, Dean Aleinikoff stressed the importance of the Student Faculty Committees (SFCs). He asked the SBA to appoint students to the SFCs early on in the academic year so that those committees could adequately function. In response, the SBA appointed students to the SFCs on September 9, 2008—five days after the beginning of the academic year. Since then, however, the SBA has encountered significant obstacles in disseminating information on those appointments and has additionally noted general dissatisfaction among SFC student members regarding the functioning of the SFCs.

This memorandum presents information related to the SFC. Part I presents a brief background of the SBA's efforts to appoint students to the SFCs. Part II presents information collected from students who were appointed on Sep. 9, 2008, to serve on one or more of the law school's Student Faculty Committees (SFC). Part III explains the challenges that the current SBA Executive Board encountered in appointing and distributing information on SFC student members. Part IV sets forth recommendations to improve the SFC system.

I. Background

During the summer of 2008, the Office of the Dean provided a list of 21 SFCs. That list is enclosed to this memorandum. The list contained one sentence-long descriptions of each SFC. Using that list, the SBA solicited the entire student body for SFC positions and received applications from 65 students. The SBA filled 54 positions in SFCs at the September 9, 2008, meeting of the SBA House of Delegates, the first meeting of the current academic year.

In addition to the 21 committees on the list of SFCs provided by the Dean's Office, the SBA learned after September 9, 2008, that three additional committees existed:

1. Faculty Appointments Committee, chaired by Professor William Bratton;
2. Green Committee, chaired by Assistant Dean Therese Stratton; and,
3. Wellness/Food & Fitness Committee, chaired by Director of Business Services Christina Farias.

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We learned of each of these three committees because each chair contacted the SBA directly. The SBA promptly appointed students to those three SFCs.

II. Survey Summary

Since Sep. 9, 2009, the SBA has been in contact with SFC student members. They have mixed reviews on the performance of each SFC and the attentiveness of SFC faculty chairs.

As a result, on the week ending on Jan. 25, 2009, the SBA Vice-President asked SFC student members to complete a three-question survey. Only students from the 21 SFCs on the original list provided by the Office of the Dean were able to fill out the survey. Thirty-two students, or about half of those currently serving in an SFC, answered the survey. The complete answers to all three questions are included at the end of this memorandum.

By answering the first two questions of the survey, students have reported that, to date,

1. 14 chairs have contacted the student members of their SFC, while 5 chairs have not. We have no information regarding 2 committees (International & Transnational Programs, and Intellectual).
2. 10 committees have met an average of 2.88 times; 9 SFCs have not met. We have no information on the Intellectual Committee and the International and Transnational Programs Committee.

The third question was opened ended—"How can the Student Faculty Committee system be improved?" Twenty three students answered that question. Some recurring recommendations are,

1. Each SFC should hold at least one meeting.
2. Clarify steps students should take once they are appointed to an SFC.
3. Provide information regarding the description and goals of each SFC.
4. Each SFC—faculty and student members included—should discuss policies prior to their implementation.

III. Challenges Faced by the SBA

The SBA faced important challenges in appointing and distributing information on SFC student members. In no particular order, these challenges have been,

1. Unavailability of a consolidated list of all 24 SFCs.
2. Lack of comprehensive descriptions of each SFC, which include the expected workload, ideal student candidates for, as well as objectives and structure of each committee. For example, we were not informed until after September 9, 2009, that the SBA could only appoint third-year law students to the Admissions SFC.
3. Inability to easily notify all SFC chairs of the SBA's appointments to their respective committees.



IV. Proposed Improvements

As a result of the information compiled above, the Dean or his designee(s) should consider implementing guidelines for future years in order to improve two key aspects of the SFC system: (1) student appointments and (2) committee functioning.

With regards to the appointments of students to the SFCs, the SBA respectfully asks that a list of all SFC committees be compiled. Each committee on the list should have a brief description; its number of student members and faculty members; any selection criteria for student members. In addition, the SBA respectfully requests that a single Administrator (“SFC manager”) be tasked with maintaining the SFC list up-to-date. The SFC manager should have the ability to email all SFC faculty chairs. This would allow the SBA to forward the appointees’ names and contact information to the SFC manager, who, in turn, would notify SFC faculty chairs of the appointments in a timely fashion.

With regards to committee functioning, the SBA respectfully requests that the Dean or his designee(s) instruct SFC chairs to contact via email their committee’s student members upon receipt of the students’ names and contact information from the SFC manager. Furthermore, the SBA respectfully requests that all SFCs schedule and hold at least one face-to-face meeting by the first month of the academic year.



COMPLETE SURVEY RESULTS

* * *

NOTE: *Students serving in the Faculty Appointments; Green; and Wellness/Food & Fitness committees were not polled.*

* * *

I. For the Student Faculty Committee(s) on which you sit ONLY, please indicate whether your committee chair (a faculty member) has contacted you about the committee.

1. 32 students answered this question.
2. 14 chairs have contacted their SFC's student members, while 7 chairs have not. We have no information for 2 committees—International and Transnational Program, and Intellectual.

Count	Yes	No	Totals
1. Admissions	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
2. Curric. and Acad. Stand.	100.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	3
3. Experiential Learning	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1
4. Finance	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
5. Financial Aid & LRAP	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
6. Graduate Programs	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1
7. Honorary Degrees	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1
8. Interna'l and Transnat'l Progs	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0
9. Judicial Clerkships	0.0% (0)	100.0% (2)	2
10. Law Journals	100.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	3
11. Legal Profession	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
12. Legal Research & Writing	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
13. Library	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
14. Professional Responsibility/Appeals	100.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	3
15. Public Interest/Public Practice	33.3% (1)	66.7% (2)	3
16. Rank and Tenure	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1
17. Student Life/Diversity	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
18. Teaching	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	2
19. Fellows	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
20. Intellectual	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0
21. Technology	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1

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II. Has your Student Faculty Committee met this academic year?

1. 32 students answered this question.
2. 10 committees have met; 9 have not met. We have no information on the Intellectual Committee and the Interna'l and Transnat'l Progs Committee.
3. 2.88 is the average of reported meetings per committee.

Count	Yes	No	Response
1. Admissions	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	2
2. Curric. and Acad. Stand.	100.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	3
3. Experiential Learning	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
4. Finance	100.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	3
5. Financial Aid & LRAP	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
6. Graduate Programs	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1
7. Honorary Degrees	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1
8. Interna'l and Transnat'l Progs	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0
9. Judicial Clerkships	0.0% (0)	100.0% (2)	2
10. Law Journals	0.0% (0)	100.0% (3)	3
11. Legal Profession	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
12. Legal Research & Writing	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
13. Library	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
14. Professional Responsibility/Appeals	100.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	3
15. Public Interest/Public Practice	0.0% (0)	100.0% (3)	3
16. Rank and Tenure	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	1
17. Student Life/Diversity	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
18. Teaching	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
19. Fellows	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1
20. Intellectual	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0
21. Technology	0.0% (0)	100.0% (1)	1

III. How can the Student Faculty Committee system be improved?

1. Have meetings Sat, 1/24/09 9:49 PM
2. The finance committee worked very smoothly Sat, 1/24/09 4:44 PM
3. How about a meeting? Sat, 1/24/09 12:21 PM
4. I've had a great experience with my committee. It hasn't required much involvement, though. It also focused on one issue instead of asking the students involved if they had an thoughts on important issues regarding the committee subject matter. Sat, 1/24/09 12:03 PM
5. Parking passes. Sat, 1/24/09 11:46 AM
6. There should be regular communications among the committee. In our case, there may be no cases which come up to review so there may be no work to do. But it could be helpful for us to review the existing guidelines, to brainstorm, etc. We met once, but there was basically nothing after that, which could be time better put to use. Sat, 1/24/09 11:40 AM

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7. *To clarify my response to question 1, I initiated the contact with the committee chair. There should be more clarity regarding steps that students should take once they are appointed to a committee. If students should initiate the contact with the committee chair, that should be made more clear. Sat, 1/24/09 11:30 AM*
8. *Unable to answer, as there has been no meeting yet. We will meet in the coming week for the first time. Fri, 1/23/09 8:45 PM*
9. *Greater % of students. Fri, 1/23/09 3:14 PM*
10. *More information about goal/purpose of committee and how SFCs reach the students. Fri, 1/23/09 9:51 AM*
11. *At least meeting, setting priorities, and discussing policies BEFORE they are implemented would be nice. Thu, 1/22/09 6:39 PM*
12. *Schedule more regular meetings, with more advanced notice. Thu, 1/22/09 6:23 PM*
13. *meet Thu, 1/22/09 6:01 PM*
14. *I really enjoyed my experience and felt that my Committee valued my input and time. It was wonderful and I have no suggestions for improvement! Thu, 1/22/09 5:43 PM*
15. *More communication. A clearer sense of mission. Thu, 1/22/09 5:38 PM*
16. *I have not received any contact from the committee chairperson and therefore have no basis to provide any feedback. Thu, 1/22/09 5:31 PM*
17. *I have contacted the professor in charge, and nothing.....I don't even know what the position is! I would like to actually meet and be productive! Thu, 1/22/09 5:27 PM*
18. *My email to the faculty chair was never answered, and the staff liaison did not email us until late November. It seems a little slow... Thu, 1/22/09 5:10 PM*
19. *The SBA needs to help coordinate the efforts of students of the various committees to press some common student themes. We also need to make sure we indeed have committed students on each of these committees in addition to making sure the committees meet. Thu, 1/22/09 4:59 PM*
20. *Have a contact person and/or a professor that actually schedules meetings. Thu, 1/22/09 4:59 PM*

Disclosure of what criteria are used to select students for the committees and who makes those decisions so that there is no potential abuse of the appointment process Thu, 1/22/09 4:58 PM
22. *As students on the SFC for Law Journals we have had zero participation in any decision making processes. We were forwarded documents concerning budgets for the different journals, but our faculty chair does not respond to e-mails regarding the role of students on the SFC or inquiries about what we should or could be doing to participate in the committee. Thu, 1/22/09 4:57 PM*
23. *It's going well....!*



ORIGINAL LIST OF SFCs PROVIDED BY THE DEAN'S OFFICE

1. **Admissions** (4 students). Responsible for voting on admissions files. Most work occurs during the spring semester.
2. **Curriculum and Academic Standards** (4 students). Responsible for reviewing upper-class curricular developments and policies.
3. **Experiential Learning, Clinics and Externships** (2 students). Recommends policies on clinic curriculum and internship programs .
4. **Finance** (5 students). Recommends operating budget to the Dean, meets on Fridays during the fall semester.
5. **Financial Aid & LRAP** (2 students). Recommends changes to the Dean and advises the Financial Aid office.
6. **Fellows.** (new committee)
7. **Graduate Programs** (2 student members). works with the tax and international programs on issues of policy and curriculum.
8. **Honorary Degrees** (1 student member). Recommends candidates for honorary degrees to the University Board of Directors.
9. **International and Transnational Programs** (2 students). considers overseas study programs and new programs offered here for foreign students and lawyers.
10. **Intellectual.** (new committee)
11. **Judicial Clerkships** (3 students). Oversees process supporting students seeking judicial clerkships.
12. **Law Journals** (3 students). Evaluates journals and makes recommendations to the Finance Committee on their budgets.
13. **Legal Profession** (3 students). Works on policies related to the post-graduation employment of Georgetown students.
14. **Legal Research & Writing** (2 students). Considers the structure of the LRW program.
15. **Library** (3 students). Advises the library staff on concerns and policies and makes recommendations to the Finance Committee.

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- 16. Professional Responsibility/Appeals** (3 students). Hears disciplinary cases involving students.
- 17. Public Interest/Public Practice** (3 student members). Considers public interest programs.
- 18. Rank and Tenure** (3 students serve in advisory capacity). Works on issues of faculty promotion and tenure.
- 19. Student Life/Diversity** (4 students). Facilitates communication between faculty and students, and focuses on issues around diversity in an effort to improve the community at the law school.
- 20. Teaching** (2 student members). Recommends ways to improve the quality of teaching at the law school.
- 21. Technology** (2 student members).