

**University of Michigan-Flint
Housing Committee**



Housing Project Student Life Workgroup

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Executive Summary

A robust and engaging menu of student life programming and activities add vigor and energy to a campus, and the community in which it lies. The charge to the Student Life Workgroup was to submit recommendations pertaining to changes/additions to programming and activities with an anticipated excess of 300 students on campus 24/7.

While providing an appealing and full menu of student life activities and programming for these residential students is the basis of this report, it is essential to note that participation and involvement by our commuter population is equally critical to expanding student life programming, events, and activities. Their participation in combination with the residential population will only enhance the vitality of campus life. It is also vital to note that the Office of Student Life will continually review and assess programming and activities in its commitment to build and sustain campus life that is fun, educative, and engaging.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education for Campus Activity Programs (CAP) was the compass guiding the Student Life Workgroup (SLWG) in its approach to the assigned task and comprehensive set of recommendations. Additional resources referenced included *The Journal of College Student Development*, National Association for Campus Activities, and Association of College Unions International.

The Student Life Workgroup utilized an approach that first broadly looked at a number of university student life/activity Web sites for themes, ideas, and insights. We subsequently visited selected campuses in Michigan to meet with student life staff and engaged in discussions about activities and programming.

Continuing with a macro to micro approach, we developed a general grouping of events and activities that form the essence and roots of student life programming. The Workgroup found this to be an efficient “next step” in organizing the report. This process of developing a general grouping of events and activities also proved useful in organizing the categories, which form the basis of our recommendations.

Overview of Student Life and Activities

Major Student Organizations

Campus Activities Board (CAB) – CAB is a student-led organization that plans, coordinates, and offers a variety of educational, social, cultural, and recreational activities. Activities include passes to recently released movies on campus as well as off, comedy shows, poetry slams, dances, parties, and activities for families such as the annual Halloween Party. Student learning outcomes from participation in CAB include the art of contract negotiation, group dynamics, time management, collaboration, and leadership.

Greek Council - Oversees all Greek Life on campus. This Council consists of representatives appointed by each on-campus fraternity and sorority. Currently there are nine (9) fraternities and sororities:

- Alpha Phi Alpha
- Theta Chi
- Kappa Sigma
- Omega Psi Phi
- Alpha Kappa Alpha
- Beta Sigma Phi
- Delta Sigma Theta
- Zeta Phi Beta
- Phi Sigma Sigma

Michigan Times – *The Michigan Times* offers students with professional journalistic aspirations as well as those who enjoy writing, reporting, and investigating opportunities to contribute to and learn the aspects of managing and publishing a newspaper.

Student Government Council (SGC) – Elected annually by the student body. SGC is the voice of University of Michigan-Flint students. The SGC works closely with University administration to meet the needs and desires of students, as well as to address their various concerns. The Council serves as the appropriating body for student clubs and organizations, and assists them in financing and planning major projects.

Student Clubs, Organizations, and Societies

There are over 80 registered academic, honors, cultural, political, religious, and social clubs and organizations at the University of Michigan-Flint. The Inter Club Council (ICC) consists of all recognized clubs and organizations, the ICC Chairperson, and the ICC Committee. ICC meets as a means for SGC, students, and organizations to communicate and collaborate. ICC ensures that University clubs and organizations function properly and provides an outlet and a forum for problem solving.

Each club and organization is responsible for completing four monthly reports (one a month) per major semester. All four reports must be submitted by the dates specified by the ICC Chairperson at the beginning of each semester (usually the last weekday of every month).

Clubs and organizations must complete three service projects per major semester. These include at least one on-campus project, one off-campus, and the third may be either. The SGC defines service projects as endeavors that benefit more than just the club or organization, and for which they receive no monetary compensation.

Recommendations

Campus and External Relations

Building, nurturing, and sustaining collaborations within and external to the University may significantly contribute to a robust campus life. Such collaborative efforts have the potential to not only increase the volume and diversity of programs and activities on campus, but also help create an atmosphere of engagement and cooperation in the community.

Internal Recommendations:

- **Academic Affairs and Student Life** - Develop strategies and seek opportunities to work with the academic units and departments to collaborate in hosting local, regional, and on occasion national speakers to discuss topics of current interest. University of Michigan-Flint faculty are excellent resources with many local, regional, and national contacts, and are accomplished and knowledgeable presenters. Student academic, professional, and honorary clubs and organizations should be encouraged to lead such efforts. The annual Sigma Tau Delta "Critical and Creative Writing Conference" is an example of a successful academic department and Student Life collaboration. The presentations and discussions could take place weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
- **Academic Affairs and AACC** - The Academic Advising and Career Center, in conjunction with academic departments and Student Life, should be encouraged to offer interactive workshops focusing on career and professional school preparation. The sessions could feature alumni and others employed in various professional and career occupations as presenters.
- **Recreational Services and Student Life** – A concerted effort is encouraged to increase the number of students participating in intramural activities as well as the diversity of offerings. It is recommended that the Assistant Director of Student Life and Coordinator of Student Activities spearhead this effort with the Director of Recreational Services. Depending upon usage patterns of nonstudent patrons, it is advised that activities taking place in the Recreation Center be scheduled during afternoons and evenings.

External Recommendations:

- Continuation and expansion of student-driven collaborative efforts with Baker College, Kettering University, and Mott Community College in programs such as the Holiday Food Drive and Relay for Life. It is recommended that student activity directors and coordinators at these institutions establish a meeting schedule to discuss and plan opportunities for collaborations beneficial to students at their respective institutions and the community at large.
- Continuation and expansion of “extra-mural” recreational and competitive activities and events between Baker, Kettering, Mott, and the University of Michigan-Flint. Last year’s inaugural local-area college Flag Football game held prior to the Ohio State/Michigan game was a great success.
- Collaborate, pool resources, and create a “Flint-Area Colleges and Universities Entertainment Group” to plan annual fall and winter concerts featuring regionally and nationally recognized musical acts, comedians, etc. This group should develop a list-serve to discuss student life programming ideas, issues, and concerns.
- Seek and subscribe to e-mails from the Whiting, Dow Events Center, Palace, DTE, and other local and southeastern Michigan providers of entertainment listing events. This information could be sent directly to students via their e-mail accounts. Information regarding discount opportunities for tickets is available from University Relations.

Clubs and Organizations

While campus-programming boards often plan many events and activities, those campuses with very active student clubs and organizations significantly boost the number, variety, and quality of daily student activities, events, and programming. Increasing student interest in student clubs and organizations, and simultaneously increasing the number of participants will be central to developing a robust and engaging student life on our campus.

Recommendations:

- The SGC President and Editor of *The Michigan Times* receive full tuition for serving in their respective capacities. This incentive is designed in part to reduce their employment hours and allow them more time for their responsibilities. Similarly, we recommend providing incentives for the presidents of clubs and organizations to implement the bulleted items to follow. Such incentives might include monetary compensation in the form of covering one-quarter to one-half tuition, small stipends (less than \$500) per semester, book vouchers, etc.

- Challenge student clubs and organizations to engage in membership drives and provide incentives including gift certificates, movie passes, book vouchers, etc. to those who can demonstrate increases in active and involved members.
- Working with University Relations, develop and implement a plan to market to students the fun, benefits, and opportunities of involvement in existing clubs/organizations, Greek Life, or starting a group of their own.
- Amend the Inter Club Council by-law to require each club and organization to offer, in addition to three service projects per major semester, at least two events related to the purpose and mission of the club or organization during each major semester.
- Revise the SGC process of allocating funds to clubs and organizations from primarily funding travel to conferences to requiring clubs and organizations to sponsor the two events referenced in the preceding bulleted item as a condition of receiving funding.
- The North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) has selected the University of Michigan-Flint for its Values Congruence Pilot Program where Greek Life at UM-Flint will undergo an assessment. It is recommended that the outcomes of the assessment be used to strengthen and grow Greek Life.

Facilities, Technology, and Equipment

Updated and well-maintained facilities and associated equipment create an ambiance that is comfortable, inviting, efficient, and conducive to assembling. The recent updating of Clint's Café by last year's Student Government Council, that included attractive new furniture, two flat-panel televisions encased in an attractive cabinet, new computers, and new pool tables/games, created an inviting, relaxing, yet vibrant atmosphere.

Recommendations:

- Working with the Space Committee, locate and/or create additional space in the University Center for clubs and organizations to meet and conduct their work. The space should be equipped with computers, printers, poster and graphics equipment, and other supplies necessary to conduct business.
- Continuation of the updating of the entire Student Loft area currently being re-carpeted and painted.

- Seek ways to finance the TMP recommendations to renovate the University Center.
- Create lounge and recreational space in the University Pavilion similar to that in UCEN. Doing so not only provides additional space for students to gather, relax, and perhaps study, it also may serve as a “transition” point luring students to patronize current and planned businesses in downtown Flint.
- Create a media and entertainment center where recently released movies can be shown throughout the day, seven days per week with late shows (until 4:00 AM.) scheduled for weekends. Showtimes would take place at specified intervals similar to that of local cinemas.

Financial Resources

University of Michigan-Flint student clubs and organizations receive financial support from the Student Activity Fee, which is allocated by the Student Government Council. An analysis of the funding method at Grand Valley State University forms the crux of this recommendation where Student Life is centrally funded (\$40.00 per full-time student) at approximately \$857,000 this past year. Absent an increase in the Student Life budget, it will be a significant challenge to increase and sustain a vigorous and engaging student life program.

Recommendations:

- In addition to the Student Activity Fee (currently \$20.00 per student), appropriate from the General Fund \$25.00 per full-time student and \$12.50 per part-time student to the Office Student Life for costs associated with all aspects of operating and administering student life activities, events, and programming, **or**
- Increase the Student Activity Fee by 1.5 % annually, or 3% bi-annually.

Human Resources/Staffing

The institutions we researched and visited have staff dedicated to specific components of student life (i.e., clubs and organizations) such as Greek Life, Student Government, leadership training, etc. The University of Michigan-Flint is currently served by one full-time Student Activities Coordinator for a population of 6,500. In contrast, the University of Michigan-Dearborn at 8,600 has a Director of Student Activities and three

Student Activities Supervisors, each with weekend, evening, and assigned responsibilities including working with clubs and organizations and collaboratively with their student life and university colleagues.

Recommendations:

- Add, at minimum, one full-time Student Activities Supervisor and preferably an additional half-time Supervisor to the Office of Student Life.
- Hire a full-time Secretary for the Office of Student Life.
- Develop a Student Life Internship Program where graduate students enrolled in programs at state colleges and universities can earn credits while interning in the Office of Student Life.
- Extend the weekday hours of Student Life from its current 9:00 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. to 9:00 A.M. – 10:00 P.M., M – R, and 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 A.M., Friday and Saturday.

Promoting Student Life Activities and Programming

A common concern voiced by students is that they are unaware of the scheduling of many activities and programs. Although the new Events Calendar is clearly one needed step in keeping the campus informed, strengthening communication with University Relations and tapping into their marketing expertise is central to making improvements in promoting and advertising events and activities.

- Collaborate with University Relations to design and implement an eclectic set of strategies to promote and keep the campus community aware of activities, programs, and events.
- Install LCD flat-panel screens (similar to the one behind the information and snack area on the first floor of WSW), in high-traffic student and staff areas including the first and third floors of UCEN, French Hall second-floor lobby, UPAV first and second floor, and third floor of MSB near the UCEN skywalk.
- Publish an annual “Get Involved –Stay Involved” magazine which will focus on health and wellness, academic resources, weekend programming, dates of significance, safety, technological resources, clubs and organizations including Greek Life, sports and recreation, getting around the area, and other topics. This publication would ideally be produced in time for distribution during the first-year student and transfer orientation season.

- Seek assistance from *The Michigan Times* and request the production of a "Get Involved" issue/insert for distribution to the campus community the first week of classes.

Evening and Weekend Programming

An array of evening and weekend programming/ activities is essential to student life. Ensuring that evening and weekend programming/ activities are diverse and complementary to those planned for the residential facility is a priority.

Recommendations:

- Conceptualize, develop, and implement a full series of evening and late night weekend programming, activities, and events. "Wolverine Late Nights," "Wolverine Evenings," or M-Flint Nights could take place in UCEN from 9:00 P.M. – 2:00 A.M. each Friday and Saturday. Programming and activities could include music and comedy, novelties and games, arts and crafts, movies and food, and sports and recreation.
- Create a Late Night Programming Committee comprised of members of CAB, graduate interns, and one of the Student Activities Supervisors to plan, coordinate, implement, and oversee late-night programming.
- Each registered club and organization would be encouraged to participate in late night programming.
- Capitalize on the passion for Michigan football and basketball by creating opportunities for students to view games after which they can gather to hangout, discuss the game, and engage in activities over refreshments. The "5th Quarter, Game Day Wrap-up, or End Game," etc. are possible titles for this programming.

Student Life Advisory Council

Currently, the Campus Activities Board (CAB) plans the majority of campus-wide activities and programming coordinated by Student Life. CAB has a president and officers, but there is an expected ebb and flow in its student membership, which adversely impact continuity.

Recommendation:

- Establish a Student Life Advisory Council comprised of the Student Activities Coordinator, the SGC President, ICC Chair, Greek Council Chair, and three to five faculty and staff members with interest in and previous experience in student life programming and events. The primary role of the Council is to advise, guide, and support the Office of Student Life in all aspects of campus life including, but not limited to, setting goals and objectives, planning and coordination of programming, and assessment.