

# College Council on Community Policy

## Meeting Minutes February 1, 2013

**Members Present:** Margaret Bruzelius, Carla Cooke, Ashavan Doyon, Beth Gillespie, Ana Gorman, Scott Graham, Mackenzie Green, Stacie Hagenbaugh (chair), Susan Levin, Samuel Masinter, Shama Rahman, Danielle Ramdath, Donna Safford, Vera Shevzov, Laura Smiarowski, Barbara Williams, Sherry Wingfield, Pamela Nolan Young

**Others present:** Maddy Neely (for Irene Rodriguez Martin)

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### I. Chair welcome

The meeting opened at 12:10 p.m. Stacie welcomed everyone and announced that during the spring semester, the Council will focus on Smith's policies related to campaign-related guests visiting Smith.

### II. Recap of subcommittee meeting—what do we mean by “politically related activity”?

The first step was to look at other schools' definitions and policies and examine “where the policies live” on other campuses. Laura Smiarowski has done some investigating (see III below). Some questions raised were:

- What about student organizations like the Smith Democrats, Republicans, etc.?
- What about money for student political groups?
- Does it matter is a student group requests space for an activity or can a politician rent a space like anyone else?

It was suggested that the subcommittee start with General Counsel and look at cases and policy, as well as what circumstances will allow for a broad spectrum of activities.

### III. Other schools' policies

Laura had responses from the Controllers of 11 COFHE (Consortium on Financing Higher Education) schools, including Amherst, Bowdoin, Carlton, Hamilton, Middlebury, Mount

Holyoke, Swarthmore, Washington and Lee, Wellesley, and Williams Colleges. Six of these institutions have formal written policies, ranging in length from a half-page to two pages. Other schools have a short statement or no stated policy. All of the schools have student groups; they cannot take a political position. The offices responsible for the policies are the Vice President's and Controller's offices and General Counsel. It has to be looked at from the perspective of 501(c)(3) tax consequences.

Margaret Bruzelius asked what the difference is between activism and politics. Stacie responded that there are a lot of gray areas.

Shama Rahman asked if we have to invite all parties if one is invited or comes. The response was that we don't necessarily have to invite everyone, but we have to allow opposing candidates to come and we need to explore then what needs to be available and when. Shama also wondered about pro-choice speakers and others. Laura clarified that this policy is just for political figures, as 501(c)(3) organizations cannot be political.

Barbara Williams asked about reviewing the policies from the Five College schools; Stacie will post them when they are available. Although UMass is in a different tax situation, we may want to look at it, too.

#### **IV. Other questions**

Beth Gillespie brought up that Obama spoke at Wesleyan's commencement. According to Laura, he was invited as an honorary degree recipient, and that does not fall under this policy. Ana Gorman wondered if there is another group on campus addressing these issues. Sam Masinter pointed out that College Relations works with Events Management. Ana also asked about the vendor code of conduct and Stacie responded that this will take precedence over that issue at this point, but we could address it more if need be. Carla Cooke mentioned that the fossil fuel divestment group on campus is working on that issue, which may be a topic for the Council to consider in the future.

**Meeting adjourned: 12:33 p.m.**

Next Meeting: Friday, March 1, 2013, at noon (Campus Center 103/104)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sherry Wingfield and Carla Cooke