

Western Washington University–Bellingham Campus Community Coalition

Thursday, October 16, 2008
St Luke's Community Health Education Center

Attending:

Anna Carey, WWU New Student Services
Ben Wurtz, WWU Associated Students Board
Bianca Smith, WWU Police Department
Bill Slodysko, Bellingham Police Department
Blair Smith, WA State Liquor Control Board
Brian Arcement, WWU Associated Students
Drug Information Center
Bruce Shepard, WWU President
Dave Doughty, WWU Police Department
Devlin O'Donnell, WWU Prevention and
Wellness Services
Don Keenan, Sehome Neighborhood
Association
Eileen Coughlin, WWU Student Affairs
Elizabeth Jennings, Whatcom Coalition for
Healthy Communities
Gayle Shipley, WWU Environmental Health &
Safety
Iain Davidson, Association of Bellingham
Neighborhoods
Jake Lunden, WWU Associated Students Legal
Information Center
Jim Schuster, WWU Viking Union/Student
Activities
John Hymas, Happy Valley Neighborhood
Association

Joshua O'Donnell, WWU Prevention and
Wellness Services
Kevin Majkut, WWU Viking Union/Student
Activities
Ted Pratt, WWU Student Affairs
Kunle Ojikutu, WWU Student Affairs
Lara Welker, Campus Community Coalition
Lindsay Kershner, City of Bellingham Planning
Division
Lisa Rosenberg, WWU Student Activities
Maggie Feeney, WWU Prevention and Wellness
Services
Malcolm Oliver, Bellingham Technical College
Margaret Vlahos, Whatcom Community College
Marie Sather, WWU Campus Recreation
Services
Mark Polin, Northwest Indian College
Mary Gamache, WWU Prevention & Wellness
Services
Michael Schardein, WWU Student Life
Paul Cocks, WWU University Communications
Randy Stegmeier, WWU Police Department
Renée Collins, WWU Student Life
Richard Maneval, Association of Bellingham
Neighborhoods
Ryan Anderson, City of Bellingham Attorney's
Office

Welcome, introductions and acknowledgements

Lara welcomed the group and noted that a significant financial commitment was made by Western to continue to Coalition, along with a contribution from the Bellingham Police Department. These commitments will allow the Coalition to continue bringing together key people and groups from the campus and community to identify issues of common concern and to work together to address them.

Coalition members introduced themselves, and Lara welcomed new members: Bruce Shepard, Ben Wurtz, Bill Slodysko, Brian Arcement, Elizabeth Jennings, Jake Lunden, and Mark Polin. Lara also acknowledged the departure of Wendy Henerlau and Michael Sledge from Western Washington University, and thanked them for their many contributions to the Coalition.

Member discussion with new WWU President Bruce Shepard

Dr. Bruce Shepard extended a warm welcome and his sincere thanks for supporting campus-community relations. He noted that the Coalition was formed in 1999, and invited Coalition members to his house to celebrate the 10th anniversary next year. Bruce stated that alcohol misuse is a “problem of great concern” for universities across the country, noting some of the

problems associated with alcohol misuse, including date rape, suicide, and drop-out rates. He said he was glad that WWU has committed funds and dedication to the Coalition.

Bruce noted his philosophy that “you lead by listening,” and invited Coalition members to voice any questions, concerns, or views.

Richard Maneval welcomed Bruce and encouraged him to attend neighborhood association meetings. Bruce said he would be glad to come and listen to their concerns.

Don Keenan noted that openness is important and that there are other associated issues that could be addressed to help students become, as Bruce put it, “better citizens.”

WWU Police Sgt. Bianca Smith, a WWU alumnae, said that she appreciates being involved with the Coalition and especially with the Let’s Talk Forums because they create dialogue among students, neighborhood residents, and the police.

John Hymas, a fellow WWU graduate, observed that the Happy Valley neighborhood has had a “love-hate relationship” with WWU – not just students, but the administration as well. He is looking forward to better relations and invited Bruce to do a neighborhood walk. Bruce agreed to that and, in response to John’s observation about conflict, said that we should not question people’s motives but move forward in the spirit of collaboration.

Malcolm Oliver stated that he looks forward to a more concerted, cooperative relationship between the Bellingham Technical College and WWU.

Liz Jennings thanked WWU for getting students involved in volunteering and service learning, using the community as a “learning laboratory” and providing much needed services in community organizations.

Activity Updates

Lara reviewed highlights from recent Coalition activities (please see the accompanying handout *CCC Update 10.16.08.*), including:

- The formation of the new Associated Students club at Western, the Viking Community Builders. The club was spearheaded by students who participated in the Coalition’s Let’s Talk Forums last year. They felt that the issues they addressed were so important that they decided to start a club to get more students engaged in community building work. The club is in the process of finding ways to raise student awareness about neighborhood issues and help students be engaged in the community. Lara remarked that it’s great to have a student-led and student-driven group devoted to community building.
- The distribution of 2,800 door hangers in the York, Sehome, and Happy Valley neighborhoods, thanks to the efforts of 15 student volunteers. The door hangers give tips on getting to know your neighbors, advertise upcoming neighborhood association meetings and Let’s Talk Forums, and provide information on keeping parties quiet, safe, and legal, as well as the consequences of alcohol-related citations.
- The upcoming Let’s Talk Forums in the York, Sehome, and Happy Valley neighborhoods. Lara noted that this is the second year that the forums are being held in the neighborhoods

rather than on campus. This fall the forums are being co-sponsored by the new Viking Community Builders club.

- The Hospitality Resource Alliance (HRA) was reconvened last fall and has been meeting regularly over the last year. Formed in 1996, the HRA was later folded into the Coalition in 1999. The HRA was recently asked to present at the national networking conference of the Responsible Hospitality Institute, a national organization dedicated to promoting responsible hospitality. While it won't be possible to attend the conference, a case study of the HRA will be included in the publication, *Planning, Managing, and Policing Hospitality Zones*.

A variety of people are involved in the HRA, including bar owners and staff, local alcohol distributors, representatives from the Liquor Control Board, Bellingham Police Department, University Police Department, WWU's Ending Violence Against Women project, the Downtown Renaissance Network, Bellingham's Downtown Alliance for Music and Nightlife, neighborhood associations, and WWU's Sustainable Transportation, which runs the WWU late-night shuttle.

Steering Committee update and proposal

Randy Stegmeier gave an update on the recent Coalition Steering Committee meeting. (Please see the accompanying handout *CCC Steering Committee Proposal 10.16.08*.)

The Steering Committee has met several times since the last general Coalition meeting. The late August meeting was concerned with future directions for the Coalition now that permanent, ongoing funding has been secured. He thanked those who participated in the meeting. The Steering Committee is bringing forward three recommendations for members' comments:

1. Focus on the issues of highest priority, which were issues identified by Coalition member discussion and surveys, including safety, noise related to parties, need for communication, and student alcohol use.
2. Revise the Coalition's mission statement to reflect a broadening of issues and involvement by the other colleges in Bellingham, including Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, and the Northwest Indian College.
3. Change the steering committee structure to become more active in an advisory role and to be a smaller group.

Discussion regarding the Steering Committee's proposal

Ian Davidson observed that "safety issues" seems too broad of a topic. Lara responded that sub goals and/or work groups will likely be needed to identify and address specific safety issues.

Liz Jennings asked for clarification regarding the communication issue. Lara explained that the issue of WWU's code of conduct has been raised by Coalition members; the steering committee sees it as part of the larger issue of a need for "formal and consistent communication" regarding policy and conduct issues.

Kunle Ojikutu noted that if Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College are more involved, then they may need to contribute financially to the Coalition. Malcolm Oliver stated that the Bellingham Technical College would be willing to contribute.

Ted Pratt commented that there is often an assumption that if a young person does something wrong, then it's a WWU student when really the person could be from another college or high school.

John Hymas stated that a lot of Bellingham residents would be surprised at how many students go to Whatcom Community College (approx. 10,000) and Bellingham Technical College.

Renee Collins stated she is surprised when she hears people say that WWU's code of conduct does not extend off-campus, because WWU has the flexibility to sanction a student for an off-campus issue. The university reserves the right to take action.

Eileen Coughlin added to Renee's comment, clarifying that there are some situations in which the code is extended to off-campus conduct. The reason the code is worded as such is so that a judgment call can be made, however some people would probably like it to extend to all cases, even for the smaller issues.

Gayle Shipley affirmed her support for the revisions to the Coalition's mission statement, saying that these are community issues as well as campus issues. She supports the broadening to include other issues and move away from a specific alcohol focus.

Anna Carey suggested comparing the code of conduct at WWU, BTC, and WCC to identify similarities and differences, noting that inconsistencies could be a source of confusion both for students and community members. In response, Lara agreed that assessment along those lines would be key to this process.

Bruce Shepard stated he was delighted to have the other colleges' participation in the Coalition. He observed that funding needs to be reviewed strategically, and suggested that arrest records would likely show that it's not just WWU students causing problems off-campus.

Lidia Tillman-McAdoo stated that the Coalition is still not widely known in the community. She also asked how the steering committee members will be selected. Lara replied that clear criteria regarding the selection of steering committee members will need to be established.

Don Keenan stated he would like to see something included in the Coalition mission statement that focuses on enhancing the community experience for both students and residents, for example, wording that points to having people get to know their neighbors.

Mark Polin asked for a definition of "the community" and wondered if it included the Lummi Reservation. He suggested including language that implies building bridges, collaborating, and working together, regardless of location.

Eileen Coughlin remarked that in regards to broadening the mission statement, it would be important to maintain clear priorities, since broadening the focus has some implications, such as dealing with individual agendas or interest groups. She observed that a mission can become so broad that you can no longer achieve the original intentions, and she encouraged developing ways to stay focused on priorities.

Lara thanked members for their input, which she stated she would share with the Steering Committee. She verified that there was general agreement about and support for the revised mission statement and other Steering Committee recommendations.

Member discussion: What *values* should guide the Coalition?

Lara explained that when the steering committee was revisiting the mission, the discussion touched aspects of the Coalition's work that didn't seem to quite fit into a mission statement. The group realized that many of those things were **VALUES** related to the Coalition and decided that it would be beneficial to articulate values, or a values statement, for the Coalition.

In an effort to make sure that these guiding values reflect the concerns of the broader Coalition, Lara asked that members do some brainstorming together about the values that should guide the Coalition's work.

Each person wrote down values for the Coalition and discussed them with other members at their table. Each group then identified three or more values that the members had in common.

The following are the values reported out by each group:

Group 1: Cooperation, respect, communication

Group 2: Collaboration, accountability to self and others, civility (honesty and respect)

Group 3: Collaboration/outreach, diversity, mutual respect, safety

Group 4: Respect, responsibility, communication/community building, safety

Group 5: Engagement/collaboration/involvement, ownership, respect, civil dialogue, education/outreach/information, safety, focus on outcomes

Closing and next steps

Lara thanked Coalition members for their input and participation. She stated that the steering committee will move forward with revisions to the mission statement, articulating the values, and further exploring the priority issues.

Malcolm suggested that the next meeting be held at Bellingham Technical College, and Lara thanked him for this offer.