



Student Voice Association Spring Town Hall Meeting

March 11, 2015 / 2:30 - 4pm / Falvey Hall

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome & Setting the Stage (5 min) (SVA Leaders from Podium)

- A. Introductions, welcome and what is SVA
- B. Overview of the agenda
- C. Open Forum expectations & Comment cards

II. SVA Updates (5 min) (SVA Leaders from Podium)

Overall, UAA, GSC, USL

Molly- Some of our successes include increased student representation on Campus Committees, such as SHVAC, the Board of Trustees, the search for Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, assist in decision-making process at MICA, and delivery of budget process. For the first time in SVA history, we have direct access to Sammy Hoi.

Ben- There is work done in the SVA UG Student Life committees. We are analyzing results from the survey.

The Graduate Student Life create the Power and Equity forum to discuss diversity issues as well as accessibility

Molly-SVA-AA have the Senior Thesis Raw Tour. You can see thesis in progress.

Ben-Thank you for SVA involvement. We will now hear speeches from Sammy and Clyde. We will pass around comment cards. We will address questions with the broadest impact.

III. State of the Union Address on Diversity (10-15 min) (Speakers are seated in the audience and will step up to the podium to present)

A. How do we deal with differences at MICA (especially given the most recent incident of censorship)? Big picture overview; student pledge? (Sammy)

Goals for MICA, see BSU response letter

1. Change the tone from reactive to proactive

MICA is by and large a healthy and welcoming place, though we have had some incidents involving ray and sexuality on campus lately. We want to steer the conversation together toward proactivity. How can we take control of our own collective actions and behavior? We don't want to negate the reactionary work going on nationally, but we want to come from a positive and productive place. How can we harness the power of diversity, with these negative incidents in mind, taking control, defining diversity, and figuring out how we want to see it on campus.

2. Look at diversity from a broad, global (comprehensive) point of view

We need to look at diversity beyond race and ethnicity, looking at social class, geography, how we learn, and more. Our goal is to support every single voice so you feel empowered and respected to do the most that you can do. We must look at everyone's different backgrounds, be mindful of our cohorts and constituents among us who need special attention right now in regards to the national conversation surrounding race and violence. We will place appropriate concentration of attention on that, and our greater understanding of each other will enable us to be the best across the board.

3. We have to situate our definition of diversity to understand it within the mission of the college of itself

We must use diversity as a catalyst to support creativity, learning how to navigate each other on campus. When you go out into the world after MICA you will have a healthy mindset to lead and interact and have these difficult conversation. We will use diversity to become the most powerful, civically capable artists and designers when we leave campus.

How do we go about achieving these three goals? Clyde will come up and talk about that process. Ny ideas are only part of the recipe for this for MICA. It's important to remember that every trustee signed on to this; we have a very powerful commitment from every person.

Then we asked faculty, asked for spiritual pledge from them, which they unanimously gave.

everyone is on board! Now I am asking us to pledge to give wholeheartedly to this conversation, too. A lot happens from student to student, aside from the official action plan. I want you to honestly address diversity with each other.

B. Current Happenings/Initiatives (Clyde)

Examples: Power & Equity, Theater Action Group, New Assistant Director

of

Diversity, etc.

The state of diversity is what we make it. We need to continue to dialogue, work, and struggle, to make MICA's community where it should be in terms of value. Come to the table and continue to dialogue about this, bring everyone in the community with you. What do we accept and what do we not accept? Last year the grad student town hall on diversity brought to our attention a need for a task force: the Power and Equity Forum was created, and is open to everyone, undergrad and grad, staff and faculty. It's a process, and talking these will take commitment and time. Sub committees within the task force include curriculum and policy issues. A committee was made to collect ideas and issues to present to the president for change next year. We are addressing these issues from multiple directions. What can be solved immediately? What can't? We are putting on programs, bringing guest speakers, and very few undergrad students are showing up. We spin our wheels working to bring programs to you, and we need you to come out and actually care about these things you want to see change on. We are aware of issues with faculty misgendering people. What is culture? What are our voices? We are creating a guide for faculty members as part of their training on sexuality of students, and understanding the importance of using informed pronouns. We are hosting the first the first spanish bilingual film festival soon to give a voice to diversity in different ways. We are also bringing in African American painters to speak. How do we respect every community?

IV. Open Forum (50 min) (SVA Leaders will remind the audience of ground rules for discussion - one person can put ground rules on the screen {from the podium} while the others {using wireless microphones in the audience} begin the discussion)

A. An opportunity for students to have a circular discussion

1. SVA can have a few questions prepared to get the conversation started

a) Students can ask their questions themselves or SVA Leaders can

read questions off of comment cards.

2. Attendees can ask questions to each other as well as ask questions to

the

administration

3. We will also collect comment cards and ask the questions with the

broadest

impact

B. SVA Officers will facilitate this discussion and keep the conversation going (or cut someone off politely, if necessary) (All SVA Leaders will help passing wireless mics or collecting comment cards)

Students can ask their questions themselves or SVA Leaders can read questions off of comment cards.

Question to administration: are there any diversity questions on application to get in to the school? Open ended questions on what they think diversity is. Teresa responds: No, there are not. Response: Why not? Answer: Any question on the application is something the applicant will be judged for admission to the college, so people would not respond well, and wonder why we are asking that. However, we are always changing our essay questions for the application. I'd be happy to consider that. Students are welcome to come to us with suggestions for applicant essay questions. Sammy: Can I answer that question from a different way? As an education institution, we shouldn't judge people for their opinions coming in, but their ability to learn. We make the colleges value more apparent to applicants? It wouldn't be fair to judge students based on this, basically. Interesting idea, but that question might not be the right way to go at it. Making sure that people come to MICA for the right reasons, so everyone has the opportunity to grow as much as possible at MICA.

Question: I would like to ask why it is so difficult for students with disabilities and medical illnesses, mental health issues to get excused from school? Mike Patterson: individual faculty members get to decide what goes into that class, and what they will accept. Student affairs has been working to try to raise the level of overall academic rigor. How do we help the faculty understand the difference between someone just disruptive for no good reason, vs someone who really needs to be excused for something serious. Case by case this is too specific. We can only work on how do we raise the tide for understanding the differences everyone brings to the table. On our campus, we are talking about diversity issues that are not visible, and thats a good point, we need to work with faculty to raise sensitivity to what may be going on with students and how we can support them.

Question: Back to incoming students, have you had any discussion about orientation programming, good place to get diversity conversation started, so many activities right when they get to this school. Where resources are and such. Answer: Sammy orientation and foundations are definitely on the table as a place to start talking early, next years program will be modified. Karol: We know that we get a good response from the freshmen on the step in, step out activity. One thing we have continued to do in the last years, surveys from orientation of this past year, good response from kids. This year working with new consultant on that program on how we can continue to expand that program, as well as how we train our orientation leaders on diversity and sensitivity. We would love to hear your specific ideas. Help us make constructive idea. Mike: We fall prey to assuming orientation means something, 5 day new students cause its the biggest. We also have transfer, international, and graduate. Our conversations in each of those four orientations are very different. Our bigger issue is not orientation, but maintaining that conversation throughout

the first year, and that's where we need to place our focus. How do we start conversations in orientation, that continue and overflow into the year and everything else. Sammy: We don't want to club people over the head with diversity, but rather subtly and directly weave them into how we interact with each other, rather than lessons we teach and they learn. Morgan: orientation is on the forefront of our mind, we are very aware of what messages we put out there even before students come. Clyde talked at graduate orientation so they knew diversity office exists. Clyde: In terms of programming, we really listen to student voices on what is working and what is not. Every year we build on and add things as concerns get brought to our attention. We have a new assistant director, dynamic programming around all issues you need. I need you to tell her what you need! OLs are being trained on how to better have this diversity dialogue.

Question: Clyde you're talking about programs the diversity office goes through, throughout the year. so what is going on on the academic side? Is there an office or a body tackling diversity for faculty and classroom settings? Answer from Jan: every year we do an audit as an annual report, a list of extensive how they are doing, what are their initiatives, projects in diversity. so we can go back and see where the gaps are. We are looking at what classes we have in diversity. If you see specific areas we can work on, please let us know. We are also looking for where the gaps are in these reports. There is a push for a more diverse faculty body. Clyde: The Power and Equity forum also is making a list to give Sammy at the end of the semester in this area. We have some dynamic faculty who are doing some wonderful things, we are just unaware unless you are in that specific class. One of the things we are discussing this year in the presidents hub is communication. How can we better communicate where we are doing things around diversity. Even having a key in course list on what classes are diversity-based. We need you to participate, once we actually put out an opportunity. We spin our wheels, brainstorm, spend our money, and then five people come. Sammy: informal conversation is just as important. Students, you are important vehicles for change. Influence your peers, your professors. You need to find a good way to confront this in the classroom. No one is talking to the offender, to the classmates, to the faculty. You have to make your voice known, and collectively we can find a way to encircle these issues. Don't stick to the formal forum of things being done for you, and to you. Informal apr tis valid part of the process.

Question from Ken: Students, how would you feel about going through this training along side faculty? Would you see a benefit to shoulder to shoulder training on this, orientation training. If you were receiving this information alongside faculty and staff. Answer: they should have a different time of welcome into college-level diversity. For a lot of students this is their first time interacting with such different people. Kira: as an upperclassman, I would love this. Maybe not as a freshman, but I see benefit as an upperclassman. Less of the hierarchy that exists in the classroom. As a grad student, I think it would hold us accountable better, creates a way for us to connect on a level without hierarchy, allow us to have those conversations before or during class setting, so we all have the same template or platform to talk about incidents. Step in step out, humbling activity to see faculty and professors doing with us, seeing we are all the same, students with facilitators. Ask more openly what the students need, facilitators need to ask these questions because it can be intimidating to have to approach facilitators with your pronouns first. Maybe freshmen can opt in or out. Could be part of elements class, foundation advisor, they tell you they are your advisor, but this would actually make them more of an equal resource.

Question from Stella: What are your specific plans for better communication internally? SVA students telling our department head info that she would take to the faculty, why didn't she get the information directly? Karol/Sammy: We have to own this as a topic we will dictate on. We want to own this message and communicate it internally and externally. We will be having focus groups for faculty, staff, students, about this specific topic. We want to gather more information on what information people want disseminated, and what is irrelevant. We are creating a focus group to discuss this.

Question: Might there be a symbol in the course list to indicate diversity classes? This is an idea that just came up, on the table. Is there any movement towards making this a requirement? Jan: certainly something we can discuss, I will be happy to take it back to the chair for discussion. Could be a concentration. Response: no I want everyone to have to take a class in it, that's the point. It shouldn't be a choice.

Question: Why is it "other" on our information forms, rather than "multicultural" when asked to list our race? Answer: We are talking about identification, but I'm not sure where we are on that. We have those boxes because of federal regulations.

Question: Critical inquiry could also be a good place to talking about diversity, maybe a year long?

Question: What opportunities are there for graduating students and alumni to stay part of this conversation? Good question. Stay connected and engaged, and we will access you and use them, this is rising over the last few years.

Question from Kira: I want to talk about homophobia threat, the word I keep hearing from administration is 'censorship' and i want to know how that specific word was chosen, because I think that word means an institution of power imposing rules. This looks more like a hate crime. I felt that word was somewhat dismissive. Sammy: now that you point it out, you're right, censorship is not the right

word for it. The specifics of the note were not threatening. It is mocking, but because the student felt strongly about it, we are respecting it as that. It was timely. Mike: you're right, language does matter. On this campus, the word censorship carries a high value. Its one of the most threatening words for your work and day to day lives that we could use. It may not be the right word, but I do think its a strong word.

Question from Molly: I want to ask about the hiring process at MICA, how preference is used. For example, I am taking two classes in indigenous art, and the professors vastly change the experience. In an African art class, what are the preferences in selecting a professor? Does education or professor's identity/experience garner preference in selecting professors for academic courses? If the professor can speak personally, it adds a lot to the class. Sammy: in hiring we try to look at whole package, and thats what we are committed to, not what. Visible diversity is also important, so we also look at the totality diversity of faculty. Students learn most from who they identify with. We look at full expertise of the person, its a very grueling process to get hired as full time here. While running current searches, diversity is highly valued. We ask a question about diversity during faculty interviews.

Question: We haven't talked about art at all. Is this discussion we are having more than something about art? is this a contemporary education issue, rather than contemporary art education issue? If people are coming here to be educated in art, what does this have to do with them? Answer from Dr. Hammong: An artist is only as valuable as they are well informed with how to interact with community and human beings. Now we are at the juncture in history where we don't have a choice. the only position we can take is to move forward with excellence. this school has an amazing reputation, they are skilled, so now we are working on your humanistic core. we are making you a whole package, able to go into any community with confidence and humility and sensitivity for the problem solving needed. Sammy: the diversity issue is very much about classroom setting and how to share your voice more honestly. We still suffer from micro aggressions in classes out of ignorance or bad intentions. Based on lack of understanding, over direction from professors on what your diversity work should look like. There is a lack of support, lack of understanding of artistic practice in the classroom. This capacity to navigate people and conversations applies to your marketability upon graduating. Many of the artist here have a side project as a civic project, public arts, etc. all of that requires understanding. Our mission to make you the strongest and best artists and designers possible is totally relevant.

V. Follow-up/Next Steps & Closing (5 min)

A. Should include Clyde

We've talked and talked, the time now is to be part of the community and get involved.

We are looking for an informal change in campus tone, student to student. Don't look only to policy to do all of this change for you, thats not how it works.