



COLLEGE OF
BEHAVIORAL & SOCIAL SCIENCES
THE SOLUTION

Dean's Student Advisory Council
College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
University of Maryland

Annual Report
2014-15

April 18, 2015

Chair: Jhansi Katakam

Advisors: Blessing Enekwe and Associate Dean Katherine Russell

Executive Summary

The Dean's Student Advisory Council (DSAC) is a representative and advisory body of 13-15 students that implements proposals to better students experience within the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, as well as advises the Dean and Associate Dean regarding students' concerns and ideas. Students from every major and program within BSOS are represented on DSAC. Dean Russell has found DSAC to be an invaluable resource for both gauging student feedback to BSOS policies and for proactively seeking out student concerns and ideas.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of DSAC activities. DSAC leadership is structured with one Chair that leads the Council and three Vice Chairs that each lead a committee as follows: Committee of Programming, Committee on Student Services, and a Committee of Academics. The leaders for 2014-2015 was as follows:

Fall 2014

Chair: Ashmi Sheth

Vice Chair of Programming: Stephanie Yanok

Vice Chair of Student Services: Jhansi Katakam

Vice Chair of Academics: Washiq Ahmed

Spring 2015

Chair: Jhansi Katakam

Vice Chair of Programming: Jennifer Chisholm

Vice Chair of Student Services: Sean Kim

Vice Chair of Academics: Washiq Ahmed

Typically, a Chair and Vice Chairs serve the entire academic year; however due to Ashmi Sheth and Stephanie Yanok graduating, they stepped down as Chair and Vice Chair of Programming respectively and mid-year elections were held in December to elect Jhansi Katakam as Chair for Spring 2015 and elect Sean Kim and Jennifer Chisholm as Vice Chair of Student Services and Vice Chair of Programming respectively.

The Committee Members, their majors, and their respective constituencies can be found in the Appendix 1.

This report is structured first with DSAC projects from the 2014-2015 academic year, broken down by committee . Then it gives an overview of individual project proposals, both

implemented and still in the process of implementation and proposed. A separate document shows our budget.

DSAC Projects broken down by Committee

Programming Committee

The Programming Committee was established to organize major annual events, like the Student-Faculty Dinner. In the future, the Programming Committee would like to implement exciting, novel, events that are of a very low cost or free of charge for students, faculty, and alumni. Furthermore, this year the committee has taken the lead on Maryland Day and the activity associated with it.

Student-Faculty Dinner: The annual Student-Faculty Dinner was held in November and served about 240 students and 60 faculty members. This event creates a great opportunity for students and faculty to interact in an environment outside of the classroom, as well as the chance to connect with faculty about other ways in get involved in their majors.

- *Benefits:* This event aligns with the goals of DSAC and the college as it improves student-faculty relations and allows for relationship building and networking. We have received positive feedback from all attendees about the event. DSAC dedicates a great amount of the budget to this event every fall, as it is very well received and has become a tradition for the students and faculty in the college.

Maryland Day Trivia: The Programming Committee is tasked with planning DSAC's involvement in Maryland Day. This year, the council decided to create a trivia game as our event at our table. There will be general questions relating to all of the different majors in the college as well as an extra category about University of Maryland campus trivia. We think this will be a good way to get a large range of people engaged and learning more about all of the majors in the college.

- *Benefits:* The Maryland Day trivia game will include basic questions related to the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. There will be eleven categories; one category for each major and one for unique University of Maryland facts. Participants will get a spin and then be asked a question from the selected category. They will continue playing until they answer a question incorrectly! This is a great way for Maryland Day attendees to learn about the BSOS College and interact with members of the Dean's Student Advisory Council.

Financial Literacy Event: After an inspiring visit from Assistant Dean Ann Holmes last semester, DSAC decided to host a Financial Literacy Event featuring Ann Holmes that would be open to all majors in BSOS. The goal of this event is for students to gain essential knowledge

about personal finances that will help them both now and after graduation. Topics to be covered include setting short, mid, and long term financial goals and saving plans, understand and establishing good credit, debit cards and student credit cards, and protecting yourself from identity theft. This event will give BSOS students the opportunity to learn about a few key areas of personal finances and ask questions in an informal setting with Dean Ann Holmes.

- *Benefits:* A problem across most college students is that they are not independent or knowledgeable when it comes to their personal finances. Students will be able to interact with each other and Dean Holmes in an informal and discussion based environment. This event will provide BSOS students with the opportunity to learn about a few key areas of personal finances that will benefit them both now and in the future.

BSOS Leadership Summit: A member of our committee planned a very successful mid-semester meeting between the BSOS Ambassadors, Sustainability Task Force, and Peer Mentors. This meeting allowed us to learn more about the purpose and goals of each group so that we can share resources and ideas.

- *Benefits:* The benefits of the BSOS Student Leadership Forum is that it a relatively low-cost event that provides an informal setting for leaders in the BSOS community to not only learn, but also have an open floor discussion on relevant student issues. Feedback from members who attended also emphasized what a great opportunity it was for them to be able to interact not only with other students who all have valuable input on the pressing student issues that BSOS faces, but also to be able to ask Dr. Russell questions and give her your own opinions on student issues that she is trying to address. Finally, the leadership forum served as a platform for student leaders to disseminate student concerns not only to Dr. Russell, but also to the Dean's Student Advisory Council whose members represent the majors, SGA, and living and learning communities within BSOS and have the opportunity to facilitate changes that other leadership groups would like to see.

Student Services Committee:

The Student Services Committee was established to improve student life through technology, alumni relations, facilities, and other non-academic issues. Through alumni panels, helping to enhance the BSOS Blog, and the DSAC Facebook Page, we are able to reach students more directly as well as provide them with networking opportunities.

DSAC Facebook Page: The DSAC Facebook page serves as a page where students can readily access events and information that DSAC puts up. Each week, we have a post on Tuesday that tells students about the events going on in the College that week as well as any other events that DSAC is hosting.

- *Benefits:* This is an easy way for students to access information as well as gains more insight into what DSAC is. That said, it is helpful for advertising and raising awareness about BSOS.

Alumni Nights: This year, 2 DSAC members proposed to have Alumni come back to serve on a panel where about 20-30 students would attend. Each panel would be a different focus and would concentration on a specific major or two. Starting in the Fall of 2014, DSAC Students Samara Cohen and Jhansi Katakam implemented a Law Alumni Panel in collaboration with MLAW. For this event we have 5 panels all from different legal backgrounds who talked and networked with the students. In Spring 2015, we have 2 Alumni Panels, the first was a Financial Services Panel and the second was a Public Policy panel both of which were successes. For the Public Policy panel, the Student Services Committee took the lead. Once again, DSAC coordinated with External Relations and also worked with the rest of the council in advertising for the panel.

- *Benefits:* This panel serves as a resource for students where they can network in a more intimate setting as well as learn a lot about their particular field of interest by talking to alums who are there now. Furthermore a lot of students have benefited from the networking portion of the panel where they get the Alumni's business cards and can contact them later.

Academics Committee:

The Academics committee was established with the goal of providing opportunities for BSOS students to connect with faculty and staff on a more personal level. Through the brown bag lunches, students have the opportunity to network with professors in a small setting. In addition, the committee has worked towards this concept of Course Previews.

Brown Bag Lunches: Throughout this past academic year, DSAC has organized and executed 10 Brown Bag Discussions. Brown Bag Discussions are events where **professors meet with students to discuss research, professional experiences, courses, internships, and career opportunities.** Usually each Brown Bag features one professor, from a different BSOS department, who leads an informal discussion with a small group of students. However, professors have also used Brown Bags to lead more formal presentations. Regardless of the format of the Brown Bag, each Brown Bag has aligned with DSAC's goal of strengthening relations between students and faculty.

- *Benefits:* Brown Bag Discussions are events where professors meet with students to discuss research, professional experiences, courses, internships, and career opportunities. Usually each Brown Bag features one professor, from a different BSOS department, who leads an informal discussion with a small group of students. Through Brown Bag Discussions, student-faculty relations are strengthened since students can call upon these professors as valuable resources in the future.

Course Previews: Course Previews allow the students to sit in on lectures of courses they may like to take in the future. The same professor teaches the specific courses granted for preview the following semester. Students who wish to participate in Course Previews agree to arrive on time at the start of the lecture and to remain until the class has been dismissed. Professors who allow their courses to be open for preview provide the specific number of open seats in advance of previews, so that the classroom does not exceed capacity.

- *Benefits:* Overall, Course Previews allow students to have the opportunity to experience the style and content of courses that may be of interest to them. This gives students the ability to better select their courses as they can rely on first hand knowledge of what the course will be like when registering for classes. Currently the ECON department serves as a pilot program for Course Previews. Depending on the success of Course Previews within the ECON department, DSAC may be able to branch out the Course Previews process to other BSOS departments.

Individual Projects

Implemented:

Ideation sessions: 10-20 minute sessions during council where we tackle a different project each week. In these sessions we create network lists, organizations that can benefit us, how we can help improve aspects of BSOS, putting together small events, and supporting other events/proposals.

Alumni Nights: Alumni who graduated from BSOS come out to participate in a panel that lasts about 1.5-2 hours. Here about 20-30 students attend and are able to not only talk to the Alumni but also network with them.

Donuts and Coffee/Cookies and Coffee: Starting in the fall 2014 semester, we held an event around finals of last semester that students could come and get cookies and coffee and that went really successful. In the spring 2015 semester, we held a donuts and coffee event that also was very successful and are hoping to continue the events throughout the semesters.

Financial Literacy Event: A new event that the committee has implemented is a Financial Literacy Event with Ann Holmes that would be open to all majors in BSOS to help students gain essential knowledge about personal finances and saving plans.

BSOS Leadership Summit: DSAC hosted the first BSOS Leadership Forum with Associate Dean Dr. Russell which was attended by DSAC, BSOS Ambassadors, Peer Mentors and the BSOS Sustainability members. It was an opportunity for members of the different student leadership groups to get a better understanding of the responsibilities of their fellow student leaders within BSOS, which was followed by an open floor discussion with Dr. Russell about relevant student issues.

Transfer Student Focus Group: DSAC, in collaboration with Graduate Assistant Couriel Brown, hosted a Transfer Student Focus Group luncheon to brainstorm and draft initiatives to better the transfer student experience within BSOS. Resulting from this luncheon, a Transfer Student Resource page will be launched during Summer 2015 as an extension of the existing BSOS blog. Additionally, for the first time, DSAC will sponsor a series of Transfer Student 'Meet and Greets' throughout the Fall 2015 to strengthen the transfer community within the college.

Ask BSOS Weebly: DSAC initially sought to provide incoming students with useful, student-generated advice. After considering several different methods, the council decided to create an accessible "Buzzfeed-style" webpage for new students throughout the college. Members of

DSAC, BSOS Ambassadors, and BSOS Peer Mentors can now collaborate to produce helpful articles presented in a fun and humorous way. The website also links to the main BSOS page and contains several submission boxes for article suggestions and questions about the college. The first article posted, called “9 Minors in BSOS You Need to Check Out,” received over 200 hits and counting. Upcoming article ideas include “12 Most Underrated UMD Study Spots,” “15 Course Registration Tips You Need to Know,” and many others. DSAC will continue to post articles throughout the rest of the semester and upcoming school years at <http://askbsos.weebly.com/>

In Progress/Proposed:

ENSP Blog: I am currently in the process of working with my advisor to create an ENSP blog. The blog would provide information on internships, advising and student activities. It will be a great resource to improve student life and fosters a sense of community within the BSOS college.

Webinar Series: Timothy Botros has proposed, and plan on implementing, a info session video series online centered around campus policies that are prevalent to students here at UMD.

Integration of LinkedIn to UNIV 100: This exposes freshmen to LinkedIn and enable them to start the important journey of molding their professional network. Working with the Career center on expanding this.

BSOS fair: This would serve to increase student awareness of BSOS and the addition of student profiles for DSAC members to the BSOS website to better connect representatives with students in their school.

Be informed: Initiative to create an online informational video series which aims to educate students at the University of Maryland about campus policy including things such as Administrative procedures, funding, the SGA, prevalent campus rules and regulations, etc. This initiative, known as “Be Informed”, aims to teach members of the University of Maryland community about campus policy in a way that is easy to find, visually appealing, analytic, and informative.

Appendix 1: DSAC Members, Spring 2014-15

More information about DSAC and biographies of members can be found on the BSOS Undergraduate Blog at: <http://bsosundergrad.blogspot.com/p/deans-student-advisory-council-dsac.html>

Committee Member	Major	Constituency
Jhansi Katakam	PSYC & Neurobiology/Physiology	Chair, At-large and AASD
Sean Kim	GVPT	SGA
Jennifer Chisholm	HESP	HESP
Washiq Ahmed	ECON and GVPT	ANTH
Nyasha Mandima	ENSP	ENSP
William Lapido	ECON	Senate
Jessie Latter	CCJS & GVPT	CCJS
Rhys Hall	SOCY	SOCY
Kiese Hansen	ECON	ECON
Sarah Meirama	PSYC	PSYC
Meredith Lightstone	GVPT	GVPT
Laura Garvie	GIS	GEOG
Timothy Botros	GVPT	Living and Learning