SGA undergoes significant internal changes

By Brooke Otser
Staff Writer

Rider's Student Government Association (SGA) has recently undergone significant structural changes. These modifications include re-organizing the senate into related groups in hopes of operating more efficiently, according to SGA President Wayne Saldanha.

Plans to restructure SGA were prompted by last year's executive board, headed by former SGA President, Kelly Schrader. This is the first semester that the new structure has been implemented and most agree that it has already been a successful adjustment.

"This first month in SGA has worked extremely well," said Saldanha.

"One of the main goals of our retreat was to create a more unified SGA and I am confident that this new structure will continue to improve the quality and output of the SGA, while spurring other needed innovations in coming years."

Specifically, the organization of SGA has been modified by replacing its commissioners with Teams. The goals and duties of the Teams are still equivalent to those of the former Commissioners, but the new structure aims at higher productivity and efficiency by allowing the two newly created teams to work together on a variety of issues.

Each team consists of several chairs with related tasks and each has a leader who reports directly to the President with updates on their progress. The first team is dubbed the Organizational Team consisting of the following chairs: Public Relations, Events Coordinator, Elections and Recruitment, and Technology and Website Development.

The second team called University Affairs consists of the following chairs: Clubs and Organizations, Community Outreach, Diversity, and Spirit and Traditions.

Each team also has two Bronc Aides, which are newly created leadership positions for students that are "looking to get their foot in the door," but may not have had previous SGA experience, according to Cassie Iochiovelli, SGA advisor.

"The new structure makes us feel like we are part of the process," said Andrew Stevens, Elections and Recruitment chair. "Jobs are clearly defined which cuts down the bureaucracy.

"For example, by having the public relations chair and events coordinator work together in a team, the senate can more effectively publicize events held on campus and expect a higher attendance."

"We are also aiming to improve not only the communication between the SGA and its constituents but also improving communication within SGA, which will allow us to reach the students better," said Kerry Greenstein, Organizational Team leader.

SGA advisor Cassie Iochiovelli also emphasizes the gain from the added leadership positions in the new SGA organization. The new structure empowers senior level leaders to take more responsibility for SGA initiatives, according to Cassie.

"A lot of really important skills are acquired from involvement in an organization like SGA," she said.

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"There are special needs that the two populations have," said Ceres. "We have to roll it out in pieces.

"The software has already been tested in the pilot by the students and now it will be put to daytime undergraduate students. Once they adjust to the program it can expand to other students such as graduates.

"Technical tests have to be done when testing products," said Edward Hetzelson, the director of management information services.

Hetzelson has been responsible for implementing the software, working with the registrar and testing.

"Now it's more of a registrar component. We've got the basics in place," said Hetzelson.

The vendor Rider will use is called Dasselt and the program being used is called WebAdvisor, which integrates with the current student information system Rider has called College.

In WebAdvisor certain changes have been made already in order to make the program convenient for the Rider student to use.

"We've changed the presentation of the webpage, so it looks a little better," said Hetzelson. "We also added POI and a 'green light'."

The 'green light' is an electronic sign or flag for a student to know that they are signed in.

"It authenticates who the advisor is," said Stefanick. "The advisor goes in and sets a flag, a box with all his advisees.""

Despite this flag a student still has to see their advisor, said Stefanick.

"We are still requiring a written signature in case a student comes in and the flag is not up yet," said Stefanick. "It's protection for us and the student. We'll eventually get away from a lot of paper work."

Other parts of registration have not changed and probably never will.

"Academic policies remain in effect, such as order of course selection. All rules still stand. It's just a matter of where they're doing it," said Stefanick.

One other point to remember is that the Registrar will not close; it will remain another method of class registering.

"Online registration is not mandatory; walk in registration will remain an option," said Ceres.

Restrictions will also be the same as walk-in; one must still wait till the day they are eligible.

"However, if one's day to register is October 28, instead of waiting on line like everyone else at 9 a.m. that day, they can register the 27th at 4:30 p.m. online after the Registrar closes.

"It's a head start within their group, if they choose to select online," said Ceres.

Everything is secure, just like Rider webmail and MyInfo, for students to access; all you need is a user name and the last four digits of your Social Security Number as the password.

"All faculty have their own authentication along with advisors and students," said Stefanick.

In addition, the Registrar can keep track of everything, such as who is dropping or adding.

"We can see what's going on," said Stefanick. "Since students can add and drop online, everything must be constantly monitored to keep scheduling running smoothly."

To make the whole scheduling classes easier and more numerical system may be added for easier registering.

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workshops on how to turn their major into a career and what options exist for their specific major. Seniors are given individual career related counseling in which a strategy is formed on how the student will go about searching for a job.

Internships are an option that Career Services highly recommends to all students, regardless of major or year.

"Whether it be for credit or non-credit, most internships help students explore a new career field related to their major and figure out whether or not they would enjoy working in that type of job," said Geherty.

"Next, students involved in internships are also given the opportunity to network, which can be extremely valuable. The student decides to apply for a position within that company," she said.

"Skills can be built in the area of their internship and students become more competitive by going through the process of getting an internship." The benefits in participating in an internship are endless. Students should start utilizing Career Services early in their college career if they want to be well prepared for their job search, according to Tyler.

"It is a misconception that Career Services is here only to assist seniors," said Tyler.

Students should be coming in as sophomores or even freshmen to gain interviewing experience and resume feedback. It is almost impossible to involve yourself in activities that will make yourself more marketable as a senior."

However, Career Services is happy to work with any student or alumni, regardless of where they are in their quest for a job.

To help students locate suitable internships, Career Services recommends MonsterTrak.

Students and alumni can post their resumes which are accessible to potential employers.

Some important upcoming dates that students should be made aware of include: Junior level workshops on Oct. 8th at 11:30 a.m. and on Oct. 15th at 5:30 p.m. in Career Services. These workshops are titled, "Junior Journey: What’s Next?"

Employers will be coming to campus to speak about interviewing skills. Sessions will take place in Career Services on Oct. 16th at 5:30 p.m. and Oct. 22nd at 5:30 p.m. There will be a Career Fair open to all majors and levels on November 7th in the Cavalla Room.

It’s in development and you would just put in one number instead of writing the subject, course number and section number," said Hetzelson.

If everything works out well with online registration, there is also talk that MyInfo will move into WebAdvisor, or students may be able to change their information online and maybe someday even make payments online.

"I'm very pleased with the whole thing; so far it's well worth it," said Hetzelson. "The real proof is how many students will use it."

"Very well run, the whole program," said Rogers.

"The support staff was very good and helpful."

"If any student would like to learn how to use the system there will be handouts in the Registrar with step-by-step instructions.

There will also be open lab times, like the pilot on Wednesday, October 17, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m in Swigert 109 or Wednesday, October 22, 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m in Swigert 109.

"Students may also figure it out really easily by helping each other out," said Stefanick.

"It may be a slow process, but once Rider students learn how to register online they will realize that it is much easier."

"It will eliminate students sleeping in the hallway, now they will be waiting by their computers," said Ceres.

It’s probably never will."