

Big Spring President's Student Roundtable

February 23, 2021

Dr. Sparks welcomed everyone, reviewed the ground rules, reviewed how issues are addressed, and began student and staff introductions. The student concerns are sent to the appropriate areas to be addressed and then these are presented to our students at the next President's Student Round Table to be held in Fall 2021. Following the discussion on student concerns, Dr. Sparks asked questions regarding Howard College's Mission, Vision and Goals for their input.

The President's Student Round Table has been implemented for over two decades now and the purpose behind this is to find out how Howard College can serve our students better.

STUDENT CONCERNS	Assigned Response
RESIDENCE HALLS	
<p>Students mentioned the residence halls need updates that could help make the rooms and environment feel more like a home away from home. Updates could include updating paint, carpet, fixtures, etc. in the dorm rooms and common areas.</p> <p><i>Response: We will request a committee meeting to begin developing a plan to upgrade our residence halls. Dorm rooms and common areas were painted last summer while residence halls were closed. Men's dorm will be installing new carpet to lobby due to damage from water leak. Residence Life staff also do walk throughs during the summer to check for updates needed and maintenance requests. Pool tables in both buildings will also be re-covered this summer to help with updates. We can also update decorations during the summer to improve the "home away from home" feel.</i></p>	<p>Christi Mikeska / Fabian Serrano</p>
<p>Students mentioned the dryers in the men's dorm do not work properly. They indicated that the dryers need to be run multiple times in order for the clothes to fully dry.</p> <p><i>Response: Dryers are several years old and need to be replaced with better models. Will be budgeting for new dryers for the 21-22 fiscal year. New washers installed in Turner Hall.</i></p>	<p>Christi Mikeska</p>
<p>Students mentioned the thermostats in the men's dorm rooms do not change temperature. They indicated it was among the baseball dorms so may be isolated to certain rooms but said the temperature stays consistent to what it is outside.</p> <p><i>Response: For energy efficiency reasons, all thermostats throughout the entire campus (classrooms, offices, and residence halls) are set to only operate from 72-78 degrees. Students did complain during the snowstorm that rooms were too cold, and they were given approved space heaters or temporarily moved to other rooms. Maintenance repaired several units after snowstorm was over to allow them to heat and cool properly.</i></p>	<p>Christi Mikeska / Fabian Serrano</p>

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<p>Students indicated there are water issues with the showers in the women's dorms. Some showers stay cold and don't ever get hot, while other showers at the end of the hall stay hot and don't cool down. The issue seemed to stem across the entire women's dorm, though mainly focused in the older portion of the residence hall.</p> <p>Response: We will have the maintenance department set all residence hall water heaters at a consistent temperature and will contact a plumbing contractor should the issues persist. Spoke with Krista and requests were made because showers were too cold, and she contacted Shane Clark directly to have heat on water heaters turned up. Last request was made in February and Krista sent out a message in February saying they had been adjusted. There have been no student requests written down stating that water is too hot.</p>	Christi Mikeska / Fabian Serrano
<p>Students mentioned there is often no ink or paper in the computer room at the women's dorm for students to use.</p> <p>Response: Paper for the computer room is kept outside the turner hall office so students can access it even when it is not office hours. Krista put in requests to have paper delivered on 10/6/2020 and 3/8/2021. Ink for turner hall was ordered from staples on 1/25/21. The ink is high yield and will last for several months.</p>	Christi Mikeska
<p>One student mentioned a leak in her dorm room that had been there since last year. She indicated she put in a work order request but the leak has not been fixed.</p> <p>Response: The leak is in room 252 and is due to a roofing issue. There is currently a roofing project being completed on all sites in Big Spring. Once the roof is repaired at Turner the smoke detector can be replaced and the leak should be corrected.</p>	Christi Mikeska / Fabian Serrano
STUDENT SERVICES	
<p>Students requested more resources or aid for those looking for transfer opportunities. Students mentioned that the application process and other requirements to transfer can be difficult to navigate as they are different from community college requirements and would benefit from mentors or additional guidance on transferring after graduation.</p> <p>Response: Although we currently do work with students regarding specific transfer questions, with the Title V REAL Grant, we will be enhancing our transfer services. We will be hosting a transfer fair and will also have additional digital information we can share with students. Also, as part of our grant work and re-design of advising services, more face-to-face interaction (both in person and virtual) will occur with students so that advisors can be proactive with students and can be of more assistance.</p>	Cindy Smith

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<p>Students mentioned a lack of accountability for some students who do not pick up after themselves or follow rules. It was mentioned that when rooms, kitchens or other areas are left a mess, students are not held accountable to pick up after themselves and it falls on staff to clean up. Students mentioned a need for more discipline/structure to hold each other accountable.</p> <p><i>Response: Room checks were conducted before spring break and students were told of issues that need to be corrected. The next round of checks are scheduled during the month of April. RAs knock on student doors to make sure they take out trash and follow up with residents who use the kitchen. The kitchen is currently closed until it is cleaned because students used it and left it open for others who did not request it be opened to use. It will remain closed until the residents clean it.</i></p>	Christi Mikeska
<p>Students mentioned the Fitness Center could use some updates to help with the general environment. This includes updates like paint and flooring or even new equipment. They mentioned the spaces feels run-down.</p> <p><i>Response: The entry way and doors have been painted white and red to brighten up the space. Some light fixtures have already been replaced with LED lights and the gym will receive new lights once they come in. The back weight room area was painted as well. Ponder, a flooring company, has given us a quote to have the gym floor re-done due to damage, but we have not received approval to move forward. This would put a new finish on the floor to make it look more updated. Terry Hansen informed us of a window project that was in the beginning stages. He is working on receiving bids so we can move forward. This project involves replacing all the windows in the fitness center and removing the window units in the back weight room with mini split units. Also, Janna is working on fundraising ideas and trying to increase corporate memberships so we can add new cardio equipment such as new stair steppers.</i></p>	Christi Mikeska / Fabian Serrano
<p>Students requested more healthy options in the cafeteria, specifically for athletes. They acknowledged there is a salad bar, but at times that is the only option. They requested hot, healthy items like grilled chicken and rice to be more readily available.</p> <p><i>Response: Grilled chicken is supposed to be offered at the grill every day. I spoke with Mindy to ensure this is an option. I also discussed rice as a daily or at least 2-3 times a week option. The cafeteria is currently offering baked potatoes at least 3 times a week. I will discuss healthier options with her for Fall 2021.</i></p>	Christi Mikeska

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ACADEMIC / INSTRUCTIONAL	
<p>Students mentioned a request for more classes to be offered, specifically ones that would be favorable to transfer universities. An example of chemistry was provided.</p> <p><i>Response: We do have an adjunct chemistry and physics position posted, so we hope to be able to offer these classes in the future.</i></p>	Jeneé Higgins
<p>Students in the Nursing program requested for additional clinicals to be offered outside of Big Spring. Students mentioned that if they desire to move away from the area or specialize in a different area it would be beneficial to have clinicals in places like Lubbock, San Angelo or Abilene for students willing to travel.</p> <p><i>Response: The LVN program travels to Odessa for specialty clinicals (Pedi/OB). RN students also travel to Lubbock and Midland/Odessa. San Angelo is now used by the RN program in San Angelo, and Abilene is out of our service area and is difficult to get clinicals with. Many times, the places farther away start clinicals at 6:15 a.m. This requires a night's stay and is not cost effective for students. It can also be a financial strain with gas cost as well.</i></p>	Luci Gabehart
<p>Students mentioned communication barriers between students and faculty. Some mentioned a specific difficulty with dual-credit students not being able to get in touch with their professors. Other students mentioned difficulty receiving responses from faculty. In some instances, it was mentioned faculty could take days to weeks to respond to student questions which results in late assignments, mistakes in work, etc.</p> <p><i>Response: The division chairs and deans will remind faculty of the need to respond to student communication within a reasonable time frame.</i></p>	Jeneé Higgins
COVID-19 CONCERNS	
<p>Students who live in the dorms requested for outside visitors to be allowed into the dorms again.</p> <p><i>Response: We spoke with coaches at the beginning of the spring semester and the coaches agreed with Residence Life Staff that outside visitors should not be allowed this semester until Covid-19 concerns lessen. As active cases go down and vaccination rates rise, we will reconsider this for the Fall 2021 semester and likely allow outside visitors again (If approved by Covid Response Team).</i></p>	Christi Mikeska
<p>Students requested attendance at basketball games to be allowed.</p> <p><i>Response: Students have been allowed to attend the men's and women's basketball games for about the last month of the season.</i></p>	Mike Yeater

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<p>Students Requested hands-on experiences in labs. They understand under current circumstances that is more challenging, but insisted they are not learning as well as they could be if labs were in person. This also falls under having all lab courses in person, not using faculty who teach online.</p> <p><i>Response: Labs are in person for the spring semester, so I do believe this is being resolved. We do have some hybrid labs this semester to accommodate more students, but there is a face-to-face, hands on experience of some kind in all labs. We are hopeful that the fall semester will allow for a return to a more normal classroom experience.</i></p>	Jeneé Higgins
<p>Students indicated a desire to travel out of state to play sports since several games had been cancelled. The primary request came from softball.</p> <p><i>Response: This is currently being addressed on a case-by-case basis.</i></p>	Mike Yeater