

Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time:	November 18, 2020 2:30PM	Location:	Zoom
Meeting called by:	Staff Council Exec.	Type of meeting:	Staff Council Monthly Meeting
Facilitator:	Staff Council Exec.	Note taker:	Gina Smith
Attendees:	Amanda Dempsey, Travis Kline, Helen Konstantopolous, Josh Smith (who had to leave on an emergency call prior to the 2:30 meeting), Ben Rogers, Kiersten Orton, Connie Murphy, Natasha Young, Clarence Green, Julie Robertson, Melissa Chesnut, Krista Barcus, Ashley Strickland, Melissa Cook, Selena Foreman, Joel Kosch, Allison Kemper (for Jenny Bucy), Elainabeth Russo, Barbara Weybrew, Hilary Steinman, Troy Brady, Evan Rand, Wendy Berthiaume, Michelle Drake, Brooke Hull.		

Agenda Items

Organizational Structure Support & Strategic Operations Reports

Leadership Advisory Team – Clarence Green reported that we will receive information tomorrow that Northwest will move to limited operations from December 14th through the 22nd; some employees will work remotely, some blended, and some will remain in their current status. Graduation ceremonies are postponed to the spring. The leadership team will meet soon to consider and possibly redefine enrollment.

Faculty Senate – No report of any items which affect staff.

Student Senate – Last meeting of the semester took place last night. Civic Services will provide Thanksgiving food boxes with enough food to feed three to four people for distribution to students next week. Organization advisors should remind their students to seek out financial help from Student Senate for organizations; the funds are intended to enable travel to conferences, but since travel restrictions are in place they can be used for virtual conference registration fees. Governmental affairs committee held an election T-shirt giveaway to students who voted as part of the Student Senate’s get out the vote effort, with two grand prizes also distributed.

Board of Regents – Troy Brady

- No report because the Northwest organizational profile, Board of Regents work session for consideration of the Northwest organizational profile, along with the open meeting session, were cancelled. Clarence confirmed that there still are no changes to the current spring semester calendar.

Benefits & Wellness Committee – Elainabeth Russo – she is not yet attending the meetings; her official term begins in January.

- Open enrollment deadline is 5 p.m. November 20, digital forms are accepted but paper forms still are required for HR files. Michelle Drake reported that 80 employees attended five information sessions about open enrollment. She reminded everyone to complete both the biometric screening and online portions of the Health Risk Assessment. Names for door prizes will be drawn after the November 30th deadline for completion of the HRAs. Michelle explained that employees who had their personal physicians conduct the biometric screening through their own doctor should not show up on the “not

completed” list. Check individual portals to make sure the HRA has been completed (the section for the HRA will not be there if it’s been completed, and reach out to her with additional questions if necessary.

Ally Affinity Group - Helen Konstantopoulos noted that the group met last week to watch and discuss the documentary The Thirteenth; some members met at the Houston Center to watch, others viewed the film at home. The movie “The Hate U Give” will be the next film to be screened. Members of the group have been handing out ally affinity cards to underrepresented students. The group also plans to send a letter to the editor of the NW Missourian containing the names of staff members whom students who may have to stay on campus during the break can contact if they need assistance. The group’s next meeting is Tuesday, December 8 at 4:00 p.m. Next term the meetings will be the last Wednesday of the month at noon; a final decision on meeting dates and times will be made next week.

Old Business Items: Update on hate speech policy – Travis Kline reported that a hate speech policy has been developed by a committee composed mostly of students and is moving forward. He described the process, noting that a hate speech policy put in place by the University of Texas generated a lawsuit soon after implementation, which prompted careful scrutiny of the proposed Northwest policy. The policy will be considered by the Board of Regents in December for possible implementation in January; it will be promoted and explained to the student body by Dr. Matt Baker, Dr. Kori Hoffman, and Will Sabio. Upon implementation the policy will be housed in the My Northwest policy portal and also linked to the Staff Council website.

New Business Items: We have received requests for Staff Council members to serve on various committees on campus, which might exempt them from service on Staff Council committees. This would place an undue burden on members of the smaller Staff Council committees, prompting a proposal to require each council member to contribute at least one or two hours of service on at least one Staff Council event to ensure that people are available where they’re needed (excluding ordinary service on the Council committees). Service hours will be considered work hours, not volunteer hours. An additional benefit of the requirement is building relationships on campus. The executive committee asked the council as a whole to consider the idea, with no action required at this time and another discussion planned in January. If the policy is adopted it won’t be in effect until the new Council begins in July 2021.

Committee Reports

Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee

The annual December employee appreciation event and gifts/recognition for staff graduating in December will take place with a socially-distanced format under discussion. Only two staff are graduating; they will receive a gift and a medallion. Selena Foreman reported that the planned movie night in Hughes Field House will not take place because of rising Covid numbers, and a safer format is being considered.

Cookies and cocoa carts operated by Aramark, with an assortment of pre-packaged cookies, will be stationed at various locations on or near December 4: possibly in the Administration Building, Facilities Services building and Owens Library, or just Administration to do a “grab and go”, feedback on this idea is requested. Multiple locations could be covered if volunteers are available to staff the carts. Several staff council members reported positive feedback for employee appreciation events being spread out over the semester, instead of a single week, so the spread-out format will be used in the future.

Outreach Committee

Ashley Strickland reported that the committee is sponsoring an online T-shirt sale as a vehicle to raise funds for the Staff Council scholarship, since Covid has prevented the traditional fundraising bake sale. An email

with a photo of the shirt, the price, and the ordering instructions was shared over Zoom. The last day to purchase is December 4th, after which the shirt orders will be placed with the Student Body. A link for donations only without the shirt purchase is also available. The fundraising information is on the Staff Council website.

Policy Committee

Melissa Cook described an update of council responsibilities with regard to the employee engagement survey and additional mandates as described in the charter. The update will be sent out for feedback to be received in the January meeting.

Engagement Survey Action Items: Questions arose as to progress or lack of progress made since the survey was conducted. Since another survey is planned for fall of 2021, how can it be determined whether improvements or changes have or haven't taken place, and whether those actions are directly related to the last survey? Melissa Cook explained that it's possible that the survey is considered ineffective due to a lack of communication about actions, rather than a lack of changes or improvements. Can Staff Council assist with that communication? Michelle Drake noted that low employee morale was one of the issues raised in the last survey, so it's important to share news of any progress; she also pointed out that the employee appreciation events were implemented as a response to the morale issue. Employees should be encouraged to send ideas to Staff Council members. Natasha Young pointed out that without knowledge of the survey results, we won't know what the changes are. Melissa Cook asked whether Staff Council can be informed about individual staff changing positions within or leaving the university Troy Brady recommended that area announcements be sent in to the Council to explain changes in staffing and staff responsibilities.

Employee Suggestions/Comments/Concerns See above.

Announcements / Area Reports

Krista Barcus explained that the annual holiday meal will be presented using food carts in assorted on-campus locations on campus; the meal will be a box dinner, and employees will be able to choose a gift when they pick up the meal. Krista and Clarence Green are considering an attempt to livestream a dinner from the Union ballroom, which will be a socially-distanced event attended only by the honorees.

The meeting adjourned at 3:32 pm.

Next Meeting

January 20, 2021 1:30pm- 3:30pm – via Zoom