

Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time:	February 17, 2021 1:30PM	Location:	Zoom
Meeting called by:	Staff Council Exec.	Type of meeting:	Staff Council Monthly Meeting
Facilitator:	Staff Council Exec.	Note taker:	Gina Smith
Attendees:	Travis Kline, Helen Konstantopoulos, Barbara Weybrew, Joshua Smith, Connie Murphy, Troy Brady, Ashley Strickland, Selena Foreman, Natasha Young, Joel Kosch, Kiersten Orton, Mike McBride, Ben Rogers, Evan Rand, Elainabeth Russo, Jenny Bucy, Alison Bagley (for Amanda Dempsey), Clarence Green, Michelle Drake, Wendy Berthiaume, Gina Smith.		

Agenda Items

Organizational Structure Support & Strategic Operations Reports

Leadership Advisory Team – Clarence reported on inclement weather, rolling power blackouts, closure of university Monday and Tuesday of this week and desire of students to get back to classes today despite blackouts. If areas have enough light, continue with normal activities during the power outages; if not, move towards an area with more light and try to work. NLT will soon be rolling out training modules developed by Dr. Tapps. Environmental scanning also will begin shortly which will involve everyone on campus. Evergy has notified the university that rolling blackouts are possible through Sunday the 22nd. President Jasinski has interviewed for a position at Minnesota State-Mankato, a development which may disrupt the Adventure 2030 plan.

Faculty Senate – Gina: Faculty Senate discussed occasional duplication of policies in the Faculty Senate and employee handbooks; the senate also distributed and discussed an NCAA Eligibility Guide for interactions with student-athletes.

Student Senate – Natasha: Student Senate is continuing to fill the mask dispensers across campus. The Off-Campus representative created a survey for students to complete in regards to the concerns students have about the harsh winter weather. The results will be used when the representative meets with campus leaders about changing the protocol for snow day/cold day. They also found that many students don't have the proper winter attire for even 32 degrees or colder. Civic Services and UPD are doing a Winter Coat Drive. Collection times are 2/17-23 from 11:30-12:30 at a booth in the Student Union. Coats can be found at the Career Closet so please send students there. The Senate is working on making a Tik Tok.

Board of Regents – Troy: Reports from Egon Heidendal and Tyler Tapps were presented regarding current and future on-ground and online enrollment. How do we make sure that we are supporting online students appropriately? Is our infrastructure adapting to this type of instruction? Troy expressed surprise and concern about the reports on significant disparities in retention and graduation rates for underrepresented students. He notes that the two-way communication between the board and staff is good, and took the opportunity to describe to the regents the work being done by staff council committees, especially with regard to employee engagement.

Benefits & Wellness Committee – Elainabeth Russo: A new fitness challenge is in development, waiting for details from Blue Cross; the challenge start date is planned on or around April first to last for six weeks. A new committee has been established to focus on mental health. Blue Cross has introduced the Mindful by BlueKC program; Beth displayed the program flyer onscreen during this meeting, and the flyer also will be attached to the minutes.

Ally Affinity Group - Helen Konstantopoulos: The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24th at noon; the current members were assigned to research past allies to learn about their efforts. Staff who are interested in underrepresented student support are urged to take advantage of the workshop offered by the Learning and Teaching Center CITE office. Next week's workshop on racism will take place both on Zoom and in the Union ballroom.

Old Business Items

Staff Council representation on other university committees: Troy would like to see a structure for this process ready to go when the new Staff Council is seated this summer. Natasha asked for identification of the committees which require ongoing SC representation, and which are short term committees requiring time-limited representation. If a Staff Council member is approached to join a new committee in the middle of the year, the member would remain on the Staff Council committee, Michelle Drake noted that a commitment to the Benefits and Wellness committee will be a year due to ongoing activities; the same will be true for the Ally Affinity group. The executive committee will develop guidelines and present to this group in the next meeting.

Recruitment of new Staff Council members by outgoing members: Current members who are leaving at the end of their terms, and who know that their area needs representation, are asked to notify by email anyone who may be interested in serving and to copy their leader if desired. The June meeting is the joint meeting of new and old councils; new members officially take their positions in July.

New Business Items

Michelle Drake and Wendy Berthiaume reported that Human Resources is working on development of a lactation policy and accommodation. A third floor room in the Administration Building serves as the current site; Owens Library also has a room available for this purpose.

Selena Foreman reported that ideas are in development for the use of funds remaining in the Staff Council account. One suggestion is to have a Bearcat Bash at the end of the year sometime after finals, outdoors if suitable, and possibly including faculty. The Staff Council budget will cover the cost of food for the event, and perhaps the Faculty Senate budget could provide a gift. The Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee would also like to sneak in a small event involving the popcorn maker between now and the end of the year. The Bearcat basketball game viewing party last week was not well attended due to several factors. Finally, the Turret Service Award nomination is due this month. It was agreed that this responsibility should be added to the timeline for next year for early action, since it was nearly overlooked this year.

Committee Reports

Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee: Planning will begin for the previously mentioned end-of-the-year Bearcat Bash.

Outreach Committee: Ashley Strickland reported that the committee has narrowed down scholarship applications and determined that the eligible applicants are related to or are a Northwest employee; two people were chosen this time to split the award.

Policy Committee: Committee chairs are asked to review flyers and to add committee activities from the past year. Updated flyers are due by March 5.

Election update: We have some nominees, and are still seeking five more with only one nominee per area to date. The goal is to know the members of the new council by the time of the general meeting in March. One representative each is needed for the areas of Athletics and Information Technology.

Engagement Survey Action Items: None.

Employee Suggestions/Comments/Concerns: None discussed.

Announcements / Area Reports: None.

Meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Next Meeting

March 17, 1:30pm- 3:30pm – Zoom