

Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: July 21, 2021 1:30PM **Location:** Zoom and OL250
Meeting called by: Staff Council Exec. **Type of meeting:** Staff Council Monthly Meeting
Facilitator: Staff Council Exec. **Note taker:** Gina Smith

Attendees: (In OL 250) Troy Brady, Tony Christian, Barb Weybrew, Gina Smith, Beth Russo, Julie Robertson, Amanda Dempsey, Marsha Martin, Jill Kain, Selena Foreman, Melissa Chesnut, Joshua Smith, Katy Schwartz Drowns, Adam Randles, Lisa Crater, Krista Barcus.

Via Zoom: Ryan Milke, Jeremy Werner (proxy for Helen Konstantopoulos), Gia Zupancic (for Sierra Rains), Ben Rogers, Kala Dixon, Colin McDonough.

Agenda Items

Organizational Structure Support & Strategic Operations Reports

- Leadership Advisory Team – Krista Barcus.
- The fall all-employee meeting will be an in-person event scheduled for August 13th.
- The university has just finalized a contract to conduct the employee engagement survey in September with the same company responsible for the last survey. Krista is composing a committee with members drawn from across campus to assist with the process of developing and administering the survey.
- Employee evaluations are due September 1; shift differentials will go into effect in August.
- Krista is exploring a variety of options for employee vaccination incentives; the funds for the incentives will be provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Faculty Senate – Gina

- No report; no meetings during summer.

Student Senate – Natasha (Troy substituted)

- No report; no meetings during summer.

Board of Regents – Natasha (Troy substituted) (also see attachment)

- FY22 budget approved, 2 percent COLA increase, additional retirement and healthcare funding.
- Environmental scan was approved during the BOR meeting.
- Projected fall enrollment 7,900 students; includes 2,100 online-only students
- Funds released from state for capital improvements

Benefits & Wellness Committee – Elainabeth Russo

- Beth screen-shared information about a proposed benefits and wellness survey divided into five elements and named IDEAL for influence, disruption, economical, accountability, loyalty. The survey will be conducted by the Lockton Company, the university's benefits consultant.

Ally Affinity Group - Helen Konstantopoulos

- No report available.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion - Brittany Roberts

- No report available.

Old Business Items: None.

New Business Items

Northwest continues to sustain custodial staff vacancies due to low salaries and more attractive employment opportunities elsewhere in Maryville. Troy noted that during a past incarnation of the Board of Regents, questions were raised about base pay for custodial staff with an interest in attracting and retaining adequate numbers of personnel. There are currently between 7 and 10 vacancies in that area. Krista will gather information for a future discussion of this issue.

Julie Robertson asked whether a remote work policy has been established. Krista responded that a policy was approved by the Board of Regents in October or November 2020, and included in the employee handbook. The policy is intended for the specific circumstances of individual positions, but not intended to be used as a blanket policy if the entire staff is sent home due to a surge in Covid cases or in other events that affect a large percentage of the staff. Barb Weybrew pointed out that during the Covid shutdown in 2020 many custodial staff were required to use significant amounts of personal time off since their work cannot be done remotely. A one-size-fits-all policy may not be the right approach.

Committee Reports

Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee – Selena Foreman: Popsicle distribution will take place next week via golf cart on Tuesday afternoon beginning at 1 p.m. She requested ideas for activities for the coming year; especially ideas for in-person events. The committee hopes to partner again with Blue Cross Blue Shield for an in-person event due to the success of this year’s Bearcat Bash. The committee would like to resume the Staff Commitment to Excellence Awards, and would also like to establish a virtual Kudos Board of the Month for contributions and comments from any staff member. Links will be sent out each month to see and contribute to the boards. The first Kudos Board is planned for August, and will be included in the HR bulletin. An administrator will be appointed to ensure that the content is appropriate. Selena requested ideas for other staff recognition possibilities.

Outreach Committee – Marsha Martin: The committee has decided to try a bake sale on campus between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Union on Tuesday, October 19, which is one of the health assessment days. After the committee sees how much money that raises, a decision will be made whether to do it again in the spring. The committee will create a Google form for baked goods contributions.

Policy Committee – Julie Robertson: The committee made a unanimous decision to recommend removing the metrics reference at the bottom of the charter; they didn’t see a need to gather information due to irrelevance. An extensive discussion took place about the 1 to 20 representation ratio but no consensus was reached, so committee members are tasked to provide individual opinions and will meet in September to discuss again, with the primary focus to determine the ratio’s effect on elections. Natasha has agreed to preside over the September meeting because Julie is on furlough during that month.

Engagement Survey Action Items: None.

Employee Suggestions/Comments/Concerns: None. Troy solicited ideas for energy conservation and waste management, and asked those present to feel free to email him with any thoughts on these topics.

Announcements / Area Reports: Selena Foreman reported that two new resident directors have been hired in Student Affairs. Marsha Martin reported that four new staff members are working in RPDC, with two remaining vacancies to be filled.

Next Meeting

September 15, 1:30pm- 3:30pm – Location TBD