

Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: September 15, 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 person: Troy Brady, Tony Christian, Joshua Smith, Barb Weybrew, Gina Smith, Ryan Milke, Colin McDonough, Marsha Martin, Lisa Crater, Katy Schwartz-Drowns, Amanda Dempsey, Beth Russo, Selena Foreman, Brad Sullivan, Adam Randles, Clarence Green, Kala Dixon, Melissa Chesnut Krista Barcus, Michelle Drake, Stacy Carrick and Mary Collins joined the meeting at 2:15.
Via Zoom: Helen Konstantopolous, Jessie Peter (for Brittany Roberts), Brad Sullivan (for Ben Rogers).

Agenda Items

Committee Breakout Meetings (1:30-2:00)

Organizational Structure Support & Strategic Operations Reports (2:00-2:30)

Leadership Advisory Team – Clarence/Krista

- Refinement of the policy process is underway. Staff have always reviewed policy before the policies are brought to the Board of Regents, review has been extended to Faculty Senate. Still discussing Covid mitigation policies with regard to face coverings. NLT this week was limited to crisis management.
- Troy reported for Krista that vaccine incentive water bottles are back in the HR office for distribution.
- Troy reported for Krista that prework is in process on the employee satisfaction survey, including establishing a baseline for our industry (educational institutions).

Faculty Senate – Gina

- Faculty Senate is updating the academic integrity policy due to sharing of course content online. FS President Dr. Peter Adam has extended an invitation for a Staff Council member to attend Faculty Senate meetings and to have a formal relationship with Faculty Senate encoded in the bylaws and charter of each group. It was unanimously agreed that this relationship will benefit both groups and should proceed, with the caveat that a Staff Council representative would not be required to regularly attend FS meetings.

Student Senate – Natasha

- A new Staff Council representative to Student Senate is needed to replace Natasha. Anyone interested should contact Troy.

Board of Regents – No report.

Ally Affinity Group - Helen Konstantopoulos

- Meetings are scheduled for the third Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Helen is the Staff Council representative to the new Inclusive Excellence Action Committee. Last night Student Senate voted and approved a \$22,000 endowment to unlock the personal feminine hygiene product containers in bathrooms in order to provide products at no cost.

Old Business Items

- Facilities continues to experience a shortage of custodians, with ten positions currently vacant. Conventional print and radio advertising has not succeeded in attracting applicants. Any ideas for reaching out to find potential employees? Helen asked which radio station is Northwest working with to play the ads, pointing out that KXCV-KRNW has a four-state audience reach.

New Business Items

Lisa Crater has volunteered to serve on the Faculty Senate committee for standardization of syllabi.

Committee Reports

Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee – Selena Foreman reported that popsicles were delivered around campus during the summer. The Kudos board received a great response, prompting a decision to upgrade to the purchased version of the board, which accommodates more participation. A link to the next month's board will be sent out soon, and the committee will work with Krista to include the board in the HR bulletin. Planning began today for a mid-to-late October event similar to the Bearcat Bash, possibly on Walkout Day. Krista has been asked to explore whether Blue Cross Blue Shield will be willing to partner with us again to sponsor the October event. Dr. Adam will ask whether Faculty Senate is interested in partnering with the committee.

Outreach Committee – Marsha Martin reported that a Google Doc is circulating for sign-ups to work for the Bake Sale. A flyer has been created and awaits approval from Mark Hendrix. The date is October 19th, 11:00 until 2:00, location is the Living Room in the Union.

Policy Committee – Katy Schwartz Drowns reported that discussion began in July on how to revise the representation section of the charter; the 20:1 ratio piece and the organization of areas under NLT are specific concerns. Under current conditions, the 20:1 ratio will require the addition of 6 people to the council, but the committee is leaning toward 2 people for every 25, preferring two people who are interested and will participate instead of six, some of whom may or may not. Joshua Smith asked whether Human Resources and the Policy Committee will consider whether employees working in Facilities Services should have a separate set of rules because their working conditions are different from the majority of the staff. Krista pointed out that many areas already have their own specific policies; Clarence noted that the University Police Department has a policy handbook which addresses responsibilities unique to UPD, such as use of force. Barb Weybrew asked for hard copies of the HR policy handbook; Krista explained that due to the need for periodic updating the handbook is published online for ease of revision. Hard copies are more difficult to keep current. Joshua also requested that overnight Facilities staff be provided with a custodial parking pass, especially those working third shift. Some of the third shift staff have received parking tickets while working. Clarence asked Joshua to visit with Amanda Cullen, who runs the UPD parking program.

Employee Suggestions/Comments/Concerns

Announcements / Area Reports

Joshua Smith will be stepping into the chair position since Natasha Young is leaving the university, so a chair-elect is needed to replace Joshua. Let Troy know if interested.

Benefits and Wellness (2:30-3:00)

Beth Russo & Brooke Hull (Michelle Drake sat in for Brooke Hull).

- A lengthy discussion took place about proposed changes in health insurance premiums and health care benefits. Krista explained the causes of significant projected premium increases, which exceed the amount which was budgeted for FY21-22.
- Number of people on the Benefits and Wellness Committee – fewer than 20. Beth Russo will take all of the comments during the current meeting under consideration. A majority of those attending this meeting expressed discomfort with making decisions that will impact all employees.

Covid Relief Funding (3:00-3:30)

- Troy asked about the status of remaining Covid relief funds, and whether they are committed for specific items or purposes. Mary Collins of the Finance office noted that the Covid funds are both a blessing and a challenge (curse.) Federal CARES funds remain; some are earmarked directly for students, similar to the stimulus funds employees may have received. Northwest was a pass-through of nine million dollars to students; by May we will pass through another 6.7 million to students. Funds to the university were used for technology for remote teaching and learning and relief for custodial efforts to prepare for return of students last fall. Guidelines for use of the money are strict and constantly changing. We have a plan for maximizing the use of the funds. Stacy Carrick noted that there is a common misconception of how funds are used; it is not a pool of money that can be spent in any way that the administration desires. We incur approved Expenses such as deferred maintenance are incurred, then reimbursed afterward. Joshua asked where he can direct staff who want to look up information about Covid funds. He was directed to the Finance website.

The meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Next Meeting

October 20, 1:30pm- 3:30pm – Owens 250