

Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time:	January 20, 2021 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:	Julie Robertson, Travis Kline, Connie Murphy, Jack Bucy, Barb Weybrew, Melissa Chesnut, Kierstin Orton, Natasha Young, Evan Rand, Ben Rogers, Allison Kemper, Wendy Berthiaume, Joel Kosch, Amanda Dempsey, Helen Konstantopolous, Selena Foreman, Elainabeth Russo, Mike McBride, Elizabeth Wales, Troy Brady, Michelle Drake, Joshua Smith.		

Agenda Items

Organizational Structure Support & Strategic Operations Reports

Leadership Advisory Team – Clarence Green was unable to attend. Troy reported on an Organizational Structure document for the university to be discussed during the Board of Regents work session scheduled for Friday, January 30.

Faculty Senate – Gina noted that the Faculty Senate has not yet held the January meeting.

Student Senate – Natasha: Blood Drive in February. Competing against Missouri Western. Get out there and donate blood!

For student organization advisors: Please remind your organizations to add events to Bearcat Link and to ask Student Senate for funding if needed.

February 9th is Virtual Speed Networking through Zoom. February 17th is Mock Interview Day in person and/or through Zoom. Career Day is February 24 in person and/or through Zoom. Encourage students to participate.

Benefits & Wellness Committee – Elainabeth Russo: First planning meeting of the year has been scheduled. There are several changes to the pharmacy plan. Rogers Pharmacy is taking the steps necessary to be in-network. Members currently on maintenance medications can call Optum to choose between home delivery and a retail location pickup; the phone number for Optum will be shared to go out with the minutes. Campus-wide reminders will be sent so students can reach out for help with pharmacy benefits. Michelle Drake reminded everyone to enter the pharmacy portal through BKBC, because access will be easier than entry through the Optum site.

Ally Affinity Group - Helen Konstantopoulos: Meetings for the spring term will be held at noon on the last Wednesday of each month. This month's meeting is scheduled for the 27th and will focus on the Black Bill of Rights.

Old Business Items: Staff Council representation on non-Staff Council committees. Troy expressed gratitude for the opportunity to include Staff Council members on various committees, but the amount of time required to serve and the possible impact on job responsibilities is a concern. A suggestion was offered to allow volunteers for external committees to be released from service on Staff Council committees. Additionally, these volunteers could be in their own group within Staff Council. Michelle Drake mentioned that a precedent from earlier years of Staff Council exists for this type of exchange. If the external committee has a limited life span the volunteers would return to regular Staff Council committees once their service on external committees is complete. The concern is that joining ad hoc groups would drain manpower

from standing Staff Council committees. No decision has to be made today, so the topic will be discussed again next month; Troy noted that expertise in areas addressed by the external committees, rather than availability to serve, may determine whether this action is feasible. We may want to recruit non-Staff Council individuals to help with Staff Council committees to serve as a recruitment tool for new members.

New Business Items: None.

Committee Reports

Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee: Selena reported that the committee is planning a Bearcat basketball watch party for the February 11th game vs. Pittsburg State. The event is to take place in the Houston Center; details will be advertised when capacity has been determined. The event will be held with social distance protocols. A meal service was discussed and rejected; the event will include a giveaway item and possibly a prepackaged basketball cookie. The committee is exploring various methods for acquiring the online broadcast. In response to a question about inclusion of staff families, Selena explained that the event will be limited to staff members only as a bonding experience.

Outreach Committee: No report.

Policy Committee: Travis displayed the proposed policy changes on a shared screen. The changes were unanimously approved via an on-screen poll. A recommendation for the Policy Committee to be led by co-chairs was discussed to alleviate the amount of work required of a single individual as chair. Would it be appropriate for the Staff Council chair-elect to step in and help the policy chair with the election process, since the chair elect currently does not have many responsibilities. The charter would have to be updated to allow this action; the current charter states that executive board members cannot serve on any committees. This issue will be taken up by the Policy Committee during the February meeting.

Dr. Mike McBride was introduced as the replacement for Melissa Cook, who has taken a position in another department.

- **Election process:** Staff count data will be needed to apportion representation. Staff Council members who are up for reelection will receive an email from the Executive Board by Monday January 25 asking about their willingness to serve. They are asked to respond by February 1st. Any individual who is in the second year of their first term is eligible for re-election; those in the first term of the first year are automatically still on the council; those in their second year, second term must remain off the council for two full years, after which they will be eligible to be elected again.
- **Committee Flyers:** Asking chairs to look at these and update for the February meeting and make any updates that are needed and return them for future distribution to possible committee members.

Engagement Survey Action Items: None.

Employee Suggestions/Comments/Concerns: Concern has been expressed about discontinuation of the NW 80; this is a result of confusion about access to time off for quarantine, which was the purpose of the NW 80. The program has now been suspended, it was discontinued at the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2020. The program cost was substantial, and was possible due to state funding so that it would be absorbed by the fiscal year 2020 budget. Federal leave was available for those with documentation from the health department.

Concern was also expressed about the timing and method of the announcement of spring break cancellation; some staff were taken by surprise to see the announcement on social media before it was released through official university sources. An NLT member had several times stated that there would not be a change in the

spring break schedule. Students and faculty were already off campus for the holiday recess when spring break was cancelled, creating an unfortunate alignment of factors which contributed to the lack of official communication.

Paycheck deposit distribution: Northwest uses a state-mandated single-deposit system; changing this would require monthly manual entry by the payroll staff, which is not possible with the current system. In some cases credit unions can deposit portions of a paycheck into multiple accounts as a service to their customers. Julie Robertson asked about the purpose of a check processing fee she recently noticed on her paycheck stub. Beth Wales explained that the fee is assessed for a cafeteria plan that some employees utilize; those who are not using the plan don't pay the fee.

Announcements / Area Reports

Recent death of Marla McCrary's father.

Tanya Riley is to retire from Northwest on Friday, January 22nd.

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 pm.

Next Meeting

February 17, 2021 2:30pm- 3:30pm – via Zoom