

Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time:	May 18, 2022 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:	Troy Brady, Tony Christian, Selena Foreman, Marsha Martin, Ryan Milke, Colin McDonough, Katy Schwartz-Drowns, Barb Weybrew, Helen Konstantopoulos, Becky Meneely, Michelle Drake, Ben Rogers, Kala Dixon, Melissa Chesnut, Beth Russo, Sierra Rains, Julie Robertson, Dr. Justin Mallett, Jill Kain, Krista Barcus, Clarence Green.		

Agenda Items

Organizational Structure Support & Strategic Operations Reports

Leadership Advisory Team – Clarence and Krista

- NLT reviewed the academic plan and strategic enrollment management plan. Additional data is being gathered for Huron, the company hired to assist with planning, including helping Residential Life to determine the ideal number of beds and helping to right-size Northwest's on-ground enrollment.
- A Green Team is developing guidelines for staff hiring search committees (faculty search committees already are utilizing guidelines). Northwest is still trending towards a two-percent COLA increase and \$15.00 base rate; we are collecting data from other peer universities. The budget goes to the Board of Regents for approval on June 16th; if passed, it will go into effect on July 1st.
- A Green Team will be assembled to examine a flexible work plan in response to requests for a four-day work week during the summer in areas where feasible. Some areas already have flexible work schedules. The flexibility plan will be specific to each department's needs, rather than one campus-wide plan.
- Three discussion sessions have taken place to develop an action plan based on results of the Employee Engagement survey.
- An experienced full-time counselor from Family Guidance will be available to assist with employee mental health beginning in the fall (August).
- Krista reported that benefits consultant Lockton's contract has ended, and the new contract has been awarded to third-party vendor USI to review cost and quality of current health benefits. We also are looking for a replacement for Optum to administer the health savings accounts.

Faculty Senate – Gina

- No report; most faculty are not teaching on campus during the summer term.

Student Senate

- No report.

Board of Regents – Gina

- No report; did not attend the most recent work session.

Benefits & Wellness Committee – Elainebeth Russo

- Beth reminded staff whose work required sitting at a desk most of the day should make sure they are moving and stretching regularly. The committee is providing instructions (attached to these minutes)

for a set of recommended exercises to assist with this effort and for relief and prevention of carpal tunnel and other ailments related to constant keyboard use. The committee is recruiting more staff in an effort to achieve a realignment; it was suggested that possibly the Staff Council chair and Faculty Senate president should be added as members of the Benefits and Wellness committee.

- Ally Affinity Group - Helen Konstantopoulos. May is Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month. Terra Feick will present a Ted talk and video during the group's June 14th meeting 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. to inform about Juneteenth and Pride Month. A picnic potluck social for all of the ally groups is scheduled for Monday, August 1st. Flyers with information on the Ally Affinity Group will be placed on tables during SOAR. Anyone who is interested in joining the executive council should contact Helen.
- Office of Diversity and Inclusion – Dr. Justin Mallett attended in place of Jessie Peter; Dr. Mallett presented a progress report on Inclusive Excellence described below in the New Business section.

Old Business Items:

- Piano music in the Administration Building. Clarence will be responsible for resolving this issue.

New Business Items:

- Inclusive Excellence goals and action items. Dr. Mallett: Create a plan to allow all entities on campus to see themselves within the work. Creation of an IE action team is underway; a group has been meeting monthly starting last October or November. A final draft of an action plan will be presented to the NLT soon. Right now individual departments are beginning to create accountable actions. The draft consists of two parts-connectivity with Staff Council goals, and analysis of the language in the employee handbook. FY23 focus will be on inclusive language in the culture and dialogue, which will be incorporated into the document in FY24. Have Northwest staff participate in diversity activities (see the attached worksheet). The Diversity and Inclusion office will house a Staff Council section of the website to track goal setting and achievement; this raised several questions. Should an action plan be included as part of the charter? Should the charter be changed to establish an inclusion committee on Staff Council? Should a Staff Council representative be a member of the inclusive action and diversity committees? How do we move that forward? The council may need to add a number of representatives in order to have sufficient people to serve on new committees. Krista noted that the employee handbook, which serves both staff and faculty, have recently been reviewed for inclusive language, and have been vetted by the Board of Regents and Husch Blackwell law firm. This topic will be added to next month's agenda for discussion and approval. See handout for additional topics.
- Dr. Mallett announced that the Social Justice Institute has changed to a classroom format event held once per month for two hours, and will require participation in a certain number of activities such as attendance at Occupy Valk lecture and presentations by guest speakers. Individuals wishing to participate will be required to complete an application process.

Committee Reports

Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee – The Bearcat Bash was well-received and enjoyed, except for slightly stale buns. Northwest Kansas City asked whether and how the free drink for each attendee on the Maryville campus can be extended to Kansas City staff; Clarence volunteered to look into this. A request was made to raise the Staff Council budget beginning with the upcoming fiscal year, some of which may be provided to Northwest Kansas City for engagement activities. Next year's budget already is

set and can't be changed, but the request will be taken up in February 2023 budget planning. Plan to set dates farther in advance so they can be included on the university calendar and so that catering is able to better plan for the Bash and for Cookies and Cocoa. Troy will look for the Rhythm of the Year document to help with this effort.

Outreach Committee – Marsha Martin – nothing to share today.

Policy Committee – Julie Robertson – Lisa Crater has been working on some issues; she's out this week. Looking at changes and updates to the charter the next time they meet. Julie has been serving as the Athletics Advisory committee staff council rep. Typically meet via Zoom, once every couple of months. This past year worked on policy recommendations on how student-athletes report absences to their instructors so that SAs have clear expectations. She will be happy to talk with anyone who is interested. Terms are limited to one year. Helen's time on staff council is coming to an end... happy to come to report on the IE action team. They will type up summaries of the committee responsibilities to distribute to staff council.

Engagement Survey Action Items

- Planning for future increases in health care costs and premiums. The new Faculty Senate president, Kristi Alexander, worked yesterday with Selena and Human Resources to discuss what can and can't be done; a document with this information will eventually be shared. Information about more affordable health care will be requested from newly hired consultant USI, with the goal of providing costs for the 2022-23 fiscal year by the time of the open enrollment period in October.
- Flexible work schedules for summer will be evaluated by a Green Team at the SLT level. Some areas need employees working all the time. Clarence noted that the definition of a flexible work schedule has been expanded. The Green Team may have a report in June of available options. Flexibility of work schedules is a well-being and work-life balance issue, not a financial issue.
- There will be no free parking because the parking fees are used to support the physical structures, such as streets and parking lots on campus. A three-year master plan for parking will be distributed at some point in the future. The possibility of providing free child care at Horace Mann and the Leet Center is under evaluation. Time for exercise during the day? Benefits and Wellness will look at campus population health. Is it possible to offer a Bring Your Dog to Work Day, or to have a dog park on campus? 1905 Fund money available from the Foundation for employee appreciation initiatives in the amounts of \$17.00 per employee and half that amount for student employees. All of the money available is not being utilized; an education effort is underway to inform everyone knows about the possibility to use these funds.
- Criteria for compensation will be examined; salaries may not reflect the criteria. A total benefits and compensation study will be done. A new engagement survey tool is a possibility.
- All-employee meeting – not enough value for the time and effort.
- Quarterly updates will be provided for all of these action items.

Employee Suggestions/Comments/Concerns

- A day shift custodian has presented concerns about not receiving information on a variety of topics affecting staff; Selena will work with Facilities Services leadership (Dan and Tina) to find a process to get the monthly Staff Council meeting minutes and other communications to all shifts of Facilities staff. The issues of access and interest/lack of interest in checking email regularly to obtain information, depending on the employee's job and employment status, were discussed.
- A staff representative is needed to join a new Campus Climate committee, as well as representatives to serve on the Inclusive Excellence and Athletics Advisory committees.

Announcements / Area Reports

- The “Blue Fridays” fundraiser for the Children’s Advocacy Task Force raised \$238.00 – Beth reported that she received another \$3.00 for the fund yesterday.

Next Meeting

June 15th 1:30pm- 3:30pm – OL250 and Zoom