

**Operating Staff Council
September Regular Meeting Minutes**

Virtual Teams Meeting
September 2, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Approved October 7, 2021

Present: Zac Birch, Evan Forbes, Patricia Gingrich, Angie Gutierrez-Vargas, Sandy Jakubiak, Natasha Johnson, Cindy Kozumplik, Rave Meyer, Frances Mitchell (Administrative Aide), Jay Monteiro, Holly Nicholson, David Rapp, Sara Richter, Jeffry Royce, Mary Schlagel, Jim Slagstad, Lauren Teso-Warner, Tracy Ward, Linda Yates

Guests: Merlynette Griffin, Pulchratia Lacey, Peter Chomentowski, Felicia Bohanon

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I. Call to Order

Nicholson called the September regular meeting of the Operating Staff Council (OSC) to order at 9 a.m. and Forbes began the recording of the virtual Teams meeting.

II. Roll Call

Attendance was vocally called by Forbes and recorded. Schlagel and Slagstad were recognized as voting members for the meeting.

III. Approval of Agenda

Kozumplik made a motion to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Meyer and passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of July 1, 2021, Minutes

Meyer made a motion to accept the Aug. 5, 2021, minutes. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer’s Report

Yates reported the budget remains at \$9,337.54. The Operating Staff Endowed Scholarship Fund stands at \$1,830.87. The report will begin to reflect the amount the Civil Service Emergency Fund holds. OSC is still working to raise \$2,500.00 before accepting applications. The joint OSC-Human Resource Services (HRS) booth at Cornfest raised \$200.00 in donations. Schlagel made a motion to accept the treasurer’s report. The motion was seconded by Forbes and passed by unanimous vote.

VI. Visiting Presenters & Guests

No visiting guests presented.

VII. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence

A. President's Announcements – Holly Nicholson

Nicholson acknowledged Merlynette Griffin, who has joined Northern Illinois University (NIU) as the interim ombudsperson and brings experience and vision that are in line with what is needed for success at NIU. Griffin thanked everyone for sharing a broader view of the university and looks forward to listening and being a resource as needed for staff that need services.

Nicholson attended a leadership meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 31. They discussed the remote working policy and groups Everyone present felt good about how the report was developed. Individual departments will be determining their own remote working processes and details, deemed appropriate because of how different the work is done from job to job, even with similar civil service titles. Nicholson noted that Hulseberg, Griffin and Nicholson are available to help resolve conflicts between supervisors and employees disagreeing over remote working agreements. HRS will distribute remote working agreements to be filled out between supervisors and employees and create opportunities for review to determine if it's working well. Overall, the leadership seems to be embracing the idea of remote working and hybrid work. Nicholson will continue to advocate for fairness for employees and bring any struggles to the attention of the NIU leadership team. Both the [PowerPoint](#) and [report](#) presented at the meeting are available for review.

B. Council Spotlight

Monteiro recognized Ayers. Rebekka was one of the best brainstormers for the 2019 Civil Service Celebration, creating a station for handcrafted cards with positive themes and promoting moral, while also supplying the necessary supplies. In 2020, Rebekka also researched and wrote several original historical articles and supplied photos for the operating staff newsletter.

C. Human Resource Services (HRS) Update

Lacey – HRS has a lot of processing going on with the return to campus by students and employees. HRS is short-staffed, more than what has been normal,

with employment coordinators recently moving to other positions. They are close to filling a couple of positions in HRS that will help with the student and graduate temporary work processing. HRS is in the process of hiring an office manager to support the new senior associate vice president and chief human resources officer, Bill Hodson. Lacey recognized Hodson's focus on improving technology and policy. The civil service audit is coming up, scheduled for Sept. 27 – Oct. 2 and will be remote. The audit covers the time period of Feb. 21, 2019 through Jan. 1, 2021. The audit will apply to most of the campus, as all positions start as civil service and are then exempted from civil service as necessary. The audit will be interviewing individuals from exempted groups to make sure HRS is making the correct designations for those exempted.

HRS is planning on more outreach and presence in the NIU and DeKalb community moving forward.

IX. Shared Governance Reports

A. Board of Trustees (BOT)

Nicholson – Nicholson is now acting as a liaison for the Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee. This is Nicholson's first time being a liaison to this committee and felt it was a very encouraging meeting, especially when they turned to the innovation update. They are developing a program called "71 North" to incubate good ideas and innovate to develop good income sources. The reports from the federal and state legislative areas were interesting and Nicholson encourages everyone to review the reports. The state was considering allowing two-year schools to offer four-year degrees in Early Childhood Education. Now instead a consortium is being created thanks to the advocacy of Dean Elish-Piper and President Freeman, as well as others.

During the Finance, Audit, Compliance, Facilities and Operations Committee, there a proposal was brought forward to get rid of desk phones and transition to Teams calling. They are developing plans to purchase additional equipment needed for the staff and faculty. There was discussion about expanding the wireless network to the exterior of the buildings on campus.

Document Services is being outsourced to R.R. Donnelley. Nicholson acknowledged the civil service employees working there and thanked the operating staff in those positions for their service to the university. Some Document Services employees will be retiring, some will bump into other positions on campus, and some will have the opportunity to interview with R.R.

Donnelley. There was discussion surrounding R.R. Donnelley's pay structure, and the reporting from the company was that they do pay a prevailing wage to employees working for them with NIU. Nicholson felt the board members demonstrated concern over the fate of the employees leaving and didn't ignore the impact that the transition would have on their lives.

Chomentowski added that there was an approval to start the first stage of looking at reducing door keys needed on campus. The plan ultimately is to replace key entry for buildings and offices with card swipes. The board questioned the proposal about the security concerns and monitoring access.

B. Faculty Senate

Chomentowski shared that the first meeting was yesterday, Sept. 1. The attendance was around 40 to 50 people and the chosen meeting space was great. They returned to unfinished business, changing the Operating Staff term from three years to one year.

C. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)

Bohanon shared that SPSC was able to elect the remaining officers: Tom O'Grady as vice president, Lupe Flores as secretary and Eric Armstrong as treasurer. They are still working on updating the council's committees and information went out to SPS members regarding membership. They are also working on replacing Jeanne Meyer who vacated the SPS personnel advisor upon retiring. The person in that position does not need to be an SPS person, so they are looking to fill the position by October. They are also in the process of sending out a workplace climate survey, which should be going out in the next week. The plan is to have that information by the end of the semester.

D. Student Government Association (SGA)

No report.

E. University Council

University Council meets next week. The meeting should be short. President Freeman has a "Welcome Back" statement and some announcements to make.

X. Committee Reports

A. Elections and Appointments

Royce reviewed existing vacancies and shared a link to the shared governance committees. Royce read off a description of the University Parking Committee and recognized Karen Smith as a provisional appointment. Royce moved to

make Smith a full member of the committee. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent. Kozumplik expressed interest in joining the committee if the meetings continued to be virtual.

Royce read off a description of the duties of the Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee. Jakubiak is currently serving on the committee and Royce has another staff member to follow up with for an appointment. Yates expressed interest if the staff member isn't able to follow through.

The Student Conduct Board also has a vacancy and continues to meet virtually, and a vacancy exists on the board for the operating staff to fill.

Johnson confirmed continued representation on Faculty Senate for the Operating Staff Council. Birch volunteered to take on Royce's current representation. Meyer motioned for Johnson to be a representative to Faculty Senate, Birch seconded, and it passed with unanimous approval. Forbes motioned for Birch to be a representative to Faculty Senate, Teso-Warner seconded, and it passed with unanimous approval.

B. Legislative Committee

Nicholson shared that the Legislative Committee met and revised Article 7: Nominations and Elections of the bylaws. Nicholson reviewed the changes and conducted a first reading of the revised bylaw. The second reading will occur during the October meeting of the OSC.

C. Public Relations and Activities Committee

Johnson shared that the committee met, but no chair was elected. Previous chair and OSC member Karen Smith was still present and helping out. The current committee members are sharing pieces of the responsibilities among themselves. One possible thing included in the upcoming newsletter is a discount for recreation membership.

Meyer is waiting on the HR Report to add to the newsletter. Nicholson will work on the President's Corner and get the newsletter out in September.

D. Workplace Guidance Committee

Yates shared that the committee met on Aug. 25. They continue to work on scheduling a meeting with Hodson, APAC, OSC and HRS to address the decrease in administrative personnel. The committee is working with Kristin Schulz, executive director of the Child Development and Family Center, who

has yet to meet with their supervisor regarding sliding scale fees for NIU staff. Shulz asked the committee to brainstorm any funding ideas to make up for lost revenue when decreasing childcare costs for staff. Yates reminded staff in the workplace that the Protecting the Pack website has signage that individuals can print and post in their area. Yates asked that staff please assist building reps in the posting of the signs in their working areas. AFSME 1890 approved the 3% raise and the lowest 1/3 of the union did receive more than that, up to a 6% increase. The increases will be retroactive to July 1, 2021.

E. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)

No report.

F. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

No report.

G. Civil Service Emergency Fund (CSEF)

The donation jar at Cornfest raised \$200 dollars. The committee will continue working on the Qualtrics application for the selection of candidates. Nicholson shared her appreciation for the members who volunteered and those who reached out about attending. Kozumplik recognized that the Sycamore Pumpkin Festival may be another opportunity for fundraising.

XII. Prior Business

No prior business was discussed.

XII. New Business

A. October OSC Meeting – Virtual vs. Hybrid vs. In-person

Royce observed that the OSC should plan on developing a hybrid meeting plan as the model will not go away anytime soon. Johnson suggested modeling after the Faculty Senate in table arrangement. Schlagel advocated for hybrid, while acknowledging they will still be at home most times. The addition of coffee was discussed and pushed to the executive committee to discuss. Nicholson made a motion to have a hybrid meeting, seconded by Schlagel and it passed by unanimous vote.

XIII. Adjournment

Kozumplik moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Birch and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan Forbes, Secretary
Operating Staff Council