

Operating Staff Council
December 1, 2022
Minutes
Hybrid Format (Altgeld Hall 125/Teams) – 9:00 A.M.
Approved January 5, 2023

Members Present: Zac Birch, Angie Gutierrez-Vargas, Natasha Johnson, Cindy Kozumplik, Mandy Kreitzer, Rave Meyer, Frances Mitchell (Admin. Aide), Kathy Mosher, Holly Nicholson, Mark Pietrowski, David Rapp, Sara Richter, Mary Schlagel, Kevin Shirley, Jim Slagstad, Linda Srygler, Tracey Ward

Guests: Felicia Bohanon, Catina Caldwell-Meade, Renata Catlett, Chris Doe, Catherine Doederlein, Lesslie Erickson, Pat Erickson, Patrick Gerhardt, Michaela Holtz, John Hulseberg, Caroline Kosmel, Pulchratia Lacey, David Mannia, Ismael Montana, Tiffany Morris, Miriah Ranken, Karen Smith, Liz Wright

Absent: Rob Kerschke, Jay Monteiro

I. Call to Order

President Nicholson called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

II. Roll Call

On line attendance electronically recorded and in person attendance recorded by Mitchell. Quorum confirmed.

III. Approval of Agenda

Rapp moved to approve, seconded by Birch and passed all in favor.

IV. Approval of November 6, 2022, Minutes

Ward moved to approve with spelling correction, seconded by Kozumplik and passed all in favor.

V. Treasurer's Report

Linda Srygler reporting:

OSC Beginning Balance -- \$9262.54

Less Holiday Social estimated expense \$200+ included in above

Endowed Scholarship Balance--\$2352 available for FY23

Civil Service Emergency Fund ending balance \$1404.55

Srygler noted eighteen grants have been disbursed and the committee

plans to award the remainder before winter break. Slagstad moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Birch, and passed by all in favor vote.

VI. Visiting Committees/Guests – University Staff Awards

Michaela Holtz, Staff Fellow

Liz Wright, Exec. Asst., Office of the President

Holtz and Wright presented the recently reorganized and expanded Presidential Staff Awards program making the process more accessible, inclusive, and user friendly for our diverse workforce. Read all about it at the President's Office website and see also the December 1 publication of *NIU Today*.

[Staff Awards Re-imagined](#)

VII. Public Comment: None

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence

a. President's Report

Holly Nicholson urged anyone who did not hear President Freeman's State of the University address to go to the Communications tab on the President's Office website to find the recording. Nicholson described the address as inspiring, motivational and reiterates Freeman's dedication to staff.

[State of the University & NIU Today](#)

The Policy Library website is undergoing an overhaul. Nicholson urged everyone to peruse the current policies about university closings and make your comments. There is a new form on the website for asking Rebecca Hunt general questions about policies.

b. Council Spotlight – David Rapp spotlighted Tracey Ward. Below are some of Dave's remarks.

“For those of you who don't know, Tracey is at the work order desk in the physical plant. Now I'm not the first person to recognize Tracey here at NIU. Tracey was applauded by a colleague in March of 2018, this is what that person had to say: 'Tracey is a great asset to NIU, she goes above and beyond to take care of the work orders, and is always kind, friendly and professional on the phone, thank you for your efforts.' Then she again was applauded in July of 2021 and the applaud went something like this: 'The Huskie food pantry was hit with a barrage of refrigeration and freezer breakdowns, Tracey made sure that the work orders were of high importance to keep them on track and get the repairs done quickly, Tracey your hard work and support are greatly appreciated!!' This is great that others have recognized her efforts in the past, I can only assume that her position can often be a thankless one, where often things that are out of her control can come back to her. i.e. from people like me, 'Tracey why haven't they come out to take care of the water faucet in LaTourette 428? or when are they going to replace the electrical outlet in Faraday 363? and many other calls and messages just from me, now multiply that by every other department on campus, I can only imagine how many similar calls and messages she receives throughout the year, but as others have expressed, and I have experienced, she is always very patient and pleasant to interact with.”

c. Human Resource Services Update

Catherine Doederlein reminded the group of the December 2 deadline for submitting requests to fill vacancies; the minimum wage of \$13 takes effect January 1, 2023; interviews for new HR staff will be held during January.

Also, Catherine reminded everyone that within her new role if you have things that you want to address about the employee experience she is interested in hearing your thoughts or suggestions or ideas, for example the issue of years of service, how do we access that information?

IX. Shared Governance Reports

a.) Faculty Senate (11/16)

Ismael Montana reported that on November 16th, the Faculty Senate reviewed their university goals focusing on four areas: **1.** Empowerment & Shared Responsibility, **2.** Student Recruitment, Student Success and Student Experience, **3.** Academic Excellence and Curriculum Innovation and **4.** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. These and other goals will be presented to the BOT on December 8, 2022, and will then become formal goals for the academic year 2023.

b.) University Council (11/30)

Dr. Jerry Blazey provided an update from the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships reporting Karinne Bredberg is now the Director of Innovation. Bredberg brings a wealth of experience facilitating and developing partnerships.

Blazey reported the State Capital Development Board is moving forward with the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Careers and Studies (NICCS) project, the consultant's request for proposals has closed and the Development Board is now in the process of selection.

Blazey provided a brief federal relations update, noting NIU's success with Congressionally Directed Spending as both Senator Durbin and Representative Underwood are supporting equipment upgrades for the Microchip Research and Development lab in the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology.

Blazey reported on the passage of the CHIPS + Science Act, which provides significant funding for both domestic chip production and for science agencies, particularly NSF and DOE.

Blazey also noted that NIU made significant contributions to the legislation, particularly through the work of Dr. Anna Quider, who over a two-year period, conceived and directed a sustained advocacy program to broaden scientific participation in the legislation. Dr. Quider successfully advocated for a legislative definition of emerging research institutions, or ERIs, and creation of a program to promote collaboration between flagship universities and ERIs like NIU.

c.) Board of Trustees Approved the appointment of Dr. George Middlemist as Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer, effective January 16, 2023.

The Board approved tenure at the rank of associate professor for Dr. Andrew Notebaert newly hired Graduate Program Director in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

d.) Supportive Professional Staff Council

Felicia Bohanon reporting. The SPS Council makes four awards: Advocacy, Cultural Competency, Supervision, Institutional Advancement, Partnership and Collaboration. Our awards committee will be looking at how to seamlessly incorporate them into the larger presidential awards program.

Our Advocacy Committee is comparing the 2017 workplace survey with our current survey to look at changes as far as SPS staff are concerned; what their needs are and then, moving forward, what are our unique needs and how can they be addressed? Are there things the Council can do?

Also, at our last meeting, we were looking at how we can make the SPS Personnel Advisor (Joe Lovelace) more visible, so our Communications and Technology committee is in the process of updating our website so that information is available. Our Constitution and Elections committee is reviewing our Constitution to make sure that it lines up with our current operating practices and procedures.

e.) Student Government Association

Holly Nicholson reported on behalf of the SGA from her University Council notes. The SGA will be making some personnel changes, including a new Chief of Staff. They are engaging the student body in training and development and student affairs is really taking the lead on that. They are looking at how they can reshape the recognition and elevation of student leaders. They've taken the Greek Life Task

Force report and started engaging one-on-one with Greek leaders and talking about the impact of the reports.

SGA and DeKalb City leaders met. They talked about the work in progress. There have been some infrastructure changes, including limiting some through traffic on Greek Row. The SGA thought the city took their input to heart and acted on it. They also spoke with the BOT on how students can provide support and stay engaged in dialogue on campus.

The Senate leader met with the fee manager for their area about the student activity fee. They have rollover funds. They are proposing some expenditures to the Senate on Friday, including giving money to the food pantry and a leadership conference, and they are trying to spend it equitably and responsibly.

Dallas Douglass will be graduating in May, so he is wanting to make sure to establish internal changes to strengthen SGA, the relationship between the two bodies, increased accountability.

X. Operating Staff Council Committee Reports

a.) Elections and Appointments

Jim Slagstad reporting: Catherine Doederlein finished up all of the vacant appointments, so nothing to report in that regard. Nobody left, nobody needed to be elected, nobody quit their committees. Jim's message was for everyone to keep doing what you're doing.

b.) Legislative Committee: No report.

c.) Public Relations/Activities:

Angie Gutierrez-Vargas reporting: The PR committee met this week. The committee's recurring meetings are scheduled for the first Wednesday of every month. At their last meeting, they discussed a few different topics regarding the newsletter; dependent scholarship, upcoming events, and some ways to get feedback from employees.

Also, if anyone has any suggestions on topics or articles that you have written, please submit your work directly to Rave Meyer, newsletter editor, at rmeyer@niu.edu

If you or anybody you know has been with NIU for less than five years, please recommend them to be one of the rookies in Rave's "Confessions of a Rookie"

feature. If you would rather, you can send their name to Rave and she will reach out to them.

If there is anything regarding the Civil Service Celebration and Council of Councils that the PR committee can assist with, i.e., promotional aspects or other things of that nature, please let the PR/Activities Committee know.

d.) Workplace Guidance

Linda Srygler reporting: The committee discussed several topics that included the Graduate Student pay problem which was resolved; the need for and value of onboarding new employees; consultation with the University Benefits Committee about devising a sliding scale or tiered system for childcare. The UBC's response was that they didn't know but the consensus was that while we don't really know how to do this, the more people who look into it, the more ideas we get and maybe something can happen.

e.) Civil Service Emergency Fund

Linda Srygler reporting: Regarding the Coin drive, Every Penny Counts, Linda is looking for another location for our coin collection jar. She is willing to drop it off. We received \$35 from the previous quarter drive and we are going to keep it going.

The committee's goal was to get some checks out ASAP before the holidays. We will be meeting and reviewing applications next week. the committee has \$1400 to work with so they expect to get that disbursed before break.

f.) Council of Councils Ad Hoc Committee: No report.

g.) Employee Advisory Committee (EAC): No report.

XI. Prior Business

Holly Nicholson reported on the work order backlog. Nicholson will be reaching out to Pulchratia in HR for needed employee numbers. In the meantime, Nicholson learned that the square footage on campus has remained stable since 2019. Nicholson expects to get the needed employee numbers and take another look at this next month.

The OSC Holiday Social is Tuesday, December 6, 4:30-6:00 p.m. at the Huskie Den. There will be plenty of delicious food and a cash bar.

XII. New Business: None

XIII. Adjournment

Birch moved for adjournment, seconded by Mosher, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Monteiro, Secretary
Operating Staff Council