

Minutes
Operating Staff Council

April 6, 2023

Hybrid Format (Altgeld Hall 225/Teams) – 9:00 A.M.

Approved May 4, 2023

Present: Zac Birch, Angelica Gutierrez-Vargas, Natasha Johnson, Cindy Kozumplik, Rob Kerschke, Mandy Kreitzer, Rave Meier, Frances Mitchell (Administrative Aide), Jay Monteiro, Kathy Mosher, Holly Nicholson, Mark Pietrowski, David Rapp, Sara Richter, Mary Schlagel, Jim Slagstad, Linda Srygler, Tracy Ward

Guests: Nicole Adams, Amanda Ascencio, Justin Bend, Scott Betts, Felicia Bohanon, Sean Carpenter, Renata Catlett, Sandra Cox, Chris Doe, Lesslie Erickson, Patricia Erickson, Patrick Gerhardt, Patty Gibbs, Christopher Gilbert, Arthur Hall, John Hulseberg, Wes Jones, Caroline Kosmel, Lauren Kurpius, Pulchratia Lacey, Mark McGowan, George Middlemist, Jack Mizgalski, Susan Mizgalski, Ismael Montana, Tiffany Morris, Jessica Nunez, Miriah Ranken, Andrew Rogers, Shyree Sanan, Jamie Schumacher, Samantha Schumacher, Justin Vest

Absent: Kevin Shirley

I. Call to Order

President Nicholson called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:00 AM

II. Roll Call

Attendance was recorded by Monteiro online and in person.

III. Approval of Agenda

Birch made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by vote.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Meyer made a motion to accept the March 2, 2023, minutes. The motion was seconded by Birch and passed by vote.

V. Treasurer's Report

Yates reported.

- a. OSC Beginning balance – \$9,462.54
- b. Endowed Scholarship balance – \$2,352.00 available for FY2023
- c. Civil Service Emergency Fund ending balance – \$280; so, the focus now is on fund raising. \$550.00 grants were dispersed in March. To date almost \$4000 has been given to 21 staff members.

Ward moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Kreitzer and passed by vote.

VI. Visiting Committees/Guests

- A. Operating Staff Endowed Scholarship recipients and parents were honored and recognized for their achievements.
 - a. Ale Vargas (student) – Angie Gutierrez-Vargas (parent)
 - b. Samantha Schumacher – Jamie Schumacher (parent) and Patty Gibbs (grandmother)
 - c. Jack Mizgalski (student) – Susan Mizgalski (parent)
 - d. Darby McGowan (student) – Mark McGowan (parent)

- B. George Middlemist, Vice President of Administration and Finance and CFO
 - a. Team – they are doing fine, and they are working on building trust.
 - b. Budget – It is going to be tough. It is \$15 mil. deficit budget and we are spending reserves. Right sizing the budget by growing revenues and realigning resources, investing in things that keep students here, not necessarily by making cuts.
 - c. Goals – figuring out how to be more strategic with the money we have. Try to think long-term rather than just about the crisis at the moment. Then do not fall back into bad habits. Set small goals and work one day at a time.
 - d. Johnson inquired whether credit hours had gone up for next year, Middlemist will follow up with OSC with the answer.
 - e. Slagstad inquired about salary practices causing turnover and how low salaries make recruitment difficult. Middlemist described what had been done at his previous employer.
 - i. Make a concerted effort to make sure people are being paid at the average of our peers.
 - ii. Created a compensation committee.
 - iii. Robust employee discounts and extended those to families.
 - iv. Lump-sum pay increases.
 - f. Meyer asked what was done to combat compression. Middlemist explained that faculty were banded by years of service and were paid no less than their peer’s averages. Staff needed their system rebuilt.
 - g. Srygler asked if Middlemist was looking forward to working with the new Vice President of Research and Innovative Partnerships and how that position will make community connections and perhaps income sources. Middlemist had met with the candidates individually. Middlemist warned that grant revenues do not often solve structural deficits.
 - h. Hulseberg asked how auxiliary departments were funded. Middlemist said that his past employer taxed revenues from other department use to fund central expenses. Another option is to charge departments just for expenses.
 - i. Nicholson asked what OSC could do for Middlemist. Middlemist asked that we have frank, candid conversations so that he knows how people feel. Feedback is always welcome. Everyone’s objective is to watch that student cross the stage.

- C. Shyree Sanan, Associate Vice President Finance and Treasury
 - Sanan commented that Middlemist is getting his bearings. Sustainability is their role and to work with staff to get the university to a financial healthy position.

Compliance is important, but they need to be flexible. If the answer is no, there is a reason behind it, and they have discussed the pros and cons.

- D. Andrew Rogers – Assistant Vice President Administration and Finance
Rogers commented that NIU has made tremendous progress in setting up the structure and infrastructure up so that Middlemist can help NIU take the next step.
- E. Jessica Nunez, the President's Office staff fellow talked about the second Staff Professional Development Academy.
 - a. It is a year-long cohort that meets the second Friday of every month August through June.
 - b. You must be full-time Supportive Professional Staff or Civil Service employees with three years cumulative service at NIU.
 - c. The premise of the program is to promote professional development by learning different facets of the university while being paired with a mentor from senior leadership.

VII. Public Comment – None

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence

- A. Monteiro announced that the Service Awards program would be today at 2:30 pm in the Altgeld Auditorium.
- B. President's Report – Nicholson reported
 - a. Governor Pritzker was on campus on April fourth. He is proposing a 7% increase for all public universities. He also wants to increase MAP funding by \$100 million, twice what IBHE had requested.
 - b. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is piloting a program that offers a condensed eight-week course for students who are struggling in a course. It is a second chance for students receiving a D or F or potentially withdrawing to receive credit for the class.
 - c. There is a grant program to encourage innovation in course work. There were 48 applications from various faculty and staff groups this year with 20 awardees.
 - d. Nicholson urged everyone to check the calendar/announcements to attend and support various awards programs and graduation celebrations that are happening.
- C. Council Spotlight – Mosher selected John Hulseberg for the award for willingness to answer questions, compassionate participation in local and state levels with focus on helping NIU staff, and the ability to multitask. Hulseberg thanked Mosher for the honor.
- D. Human Resource Services Update – Lacey reported
 - a. HR has been interviewing for their HR Representative, Officer, and Assistant Manager vacancies.
 - b. They have begun interviews for the Chief HR Officer position.
 - c. There is a team working on moving students and grad assistants into PeopleAdmin, but no date as to when that will happen.
 - d. The state civil service system is in the process of updating the classifications, exams, and credentials for the IT areas. No more paper exams.
 - e. Slagstad asked about salary reviews. Lacey said salary reviews as part of union negotiations are happening. Departments are asking HR to look at specific

groups of classifications because they are struggling to hire based on their own research of professional associations, other universities, etc.

IX. Shared Governance Reports

- A. Board of Trustees – Montana reported
 - a. Four members of the BoT terms had expired. Governor Pritzker reappointed Eric Wasowicz, Rita Athas, and Dennis Barsema. Robert Pritchard’s vacant position has not been filled yet. Wasowicz and Athas were reelected as chair and vice-chair respectively.
 - b. Action items:
 - i. A four-year agreement with the United Faculty Alliance Local 4100.
 - ii. University recommendation for the new Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences – Kelly Fiala.
 - iii. Law student tuition and fees.
 - iv. Sale of the Nursing building to DeKalb Community Unit School District #428.
 - v. 2024 master agreement facility contract renewals.
 - c. Dean Robert Brinkman of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences presented on the eight-week courses mentioned earlier.
- B. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC) – Bohanon reported
Nominations deadline for SPSC members is April 7th.
- C. Faculty Senate – No report
- D. University Council – Nicholson reported
 - a. The Athletic Board talked about the academic performance of our students. The average GPA is 3.0. 123 student had 4.0. NIU has had six MAC conference students of the week. This is the 50th anniversary of Title IX. This year’s NCAA focus is on health and wellness.
 - b. Budget update – President Freeman summarized budget advocacy efforts.
- E. Student Government Association (SGA) – Nicholson reported
They are in the middle of elections.

X. Operating Staff Council Committee Reports

- A. Elections and Appointments – Slagstad reported
 - a. The four university committees looking for Operating Staff representatives are the Athletic Board, Parking Appeals Committee, Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee, and University Benefits Committee. Times of Meetings were given for each. Slagstad asked for people to email him if they are interested and then vote at the next meeting.
 - b. Call for OSC deadline is April 14th.
- B. Legislative Committee – Nicholson reported
Second reading of the change to Bylaw Article 7: Nominations and Elections to move elections of OSC officers from July to June. This would allow transition time for new officers. This would begin in 2025. Slagstad made a motion to accept the bylaw change. The motion was seconded by Schlagel and passed by vote.

- C. Public Relations/Activities – No report
- D. Workplace Guidance – Srygler reported.
 - a. Numbers for the decrease in administrative professionals for dates between April 2019 and March 2023 are holding steady at being down 32%. This information and a proposal was forwarded to Liz Guess, Interim CHRO.
 - b. A reminder was sent out for people to take the Great Colleges to Work For survey.
- E. Civil Service Emergency Fund – Srygler reported
 - a. One \$250 and two \$150 awards were given out since the March OSC meeting.
 - b. Applications are closed currently to allow for fundraising/replenishing the fund.
- F. Civil Service Celebration Committee – Kozumplik reported
 - a. The date of the celebration is July 25th from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. OSC need to be there to help from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM if possible.
 - b. Budget and menu will be finalized at the next meeting in two weeks.
 - c. Nicholson asked if the name would change if we were including SPS this year. Kozumplik said that the committee decided to leave the event only open to CS so the name would not change. Nicholson commented that she had promised some people that SPS would be invited. It was decided to work on this issue later.
- G. Council of Councils Ad Hoc Committee – Kozumplik reported
 - a. The date has been set for Friday, October 20th.
 - b. The theme will be “Advocating for the Collective Good.”
 - c. All OSC members are invited. Please block off your calendars from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM that day. The event will run from approximately 8:30 AM to 3:00PM.
 - d. Guest speaker and budget finalization is the next step.
- H. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC) – Nicholson reported for Hulseberg
 - EAC will meet April 20th at ISU. An agenda highlight is a joint meeting with HR directors from across the state to work on improving the state university civil service system. There has not been a formal meeting of this kind in five years.

XI. Prior Business - None

XII. New Business

- A. David Rapp inquired about how many people are involved in deciding who receives the awards, how it is voted on, etc. Srygler responded that there were 12 or people involved representing both SPS and OS staff. People are urged to keep nominating people even if they did not receive an award this year. Nominees were ranked with a point system. President Freeman sent letters out to nominees that did not receive an award and to their nominators.

XIII. Adjournment

Mosher moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Monteiro, Secretary
Operating Staff Council