

Minutes
Operating Staff Council

February 2, 2023

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

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, Sara Richter, Kevin Shirley, Jim Slagstad, Linda Srygler, Tracy Ward

Guests: Felicia Bohanon, Catina Caldwell-Mead, Sean Carpenter, Renara Catlett, Sandra Cox, Chris Doe, Cathy Doederlein, Lesslie Erickson, Patricia Erickson, Patrick Gerhardt, John Hulseberg, Caroline Kosmel, Lauren Kurpius, Pulchratia Lacey, David Mannia, Ismael Montana, Tiffany Morris, Miriah Ranken, Debra Rempfer, Jessica Van Etten, Patricia Wallace, Liz Wright

Absent: David Rapp, Mary Schlagel

I. Call to Order

President Nicholson called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:03 AM

II. Roll Call

Attendance was recorded by Monteiro online and in person.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of Minutes

Ward made a motion to accept the January 5, 2023, minutes. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik 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 – \$697.67. One \$250.00 grant was dispersed on January 18th.

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

VI. Visiting Committees/Guests – None

VII. Public Comment – None

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence

A. President's Report – Nicholson reported

- a. Huskie Pride T-shirts are still available at the bookstore. You are encouraged to purchase one as the proceeds support the general scholarship fund. A new one will be designed for the next homecoming.
- b. The President's Leadership Meeting on 1/24 there was a report on the greatest colleges to work for survey. Nicholson, Rena Cotsones, and Michaela Holtz presented on shared leadership.
- c. February is Black History Month. There are a lot of events happening to support and to support employees. Please attend any that you can.

B. Council Spotlight – Ward nominated Kathy Mosher for her patience, and also for her help to the Physical Plant so that they can accomplish work orders.

C. Human Resource Services Update – Lacey reported

- a. Bill Hodson will be leaving NIU. His last day is February 24th. Liz Guess has been appointed to be the interim Chief.
- b. HR has hired some new people.
 - i. Angela Oplt – HR Officer, Classification and Compensation
 - ii. Amy Walker – HR Representative, Employee Lifecycle with student employees
- c. Internal movements
 - i. Susan Kerschke moved into HR system manager position, Civil Service and Extra Help processing
 - ii. Grace Sherburne moved from an HR Representative with Classification and Compensation to an HR Officer, Employee Lifecycle Students and Grads area.
 - iii. Michael Rhode moved into the Students and Grads area too.
- d. Srygler asked the status of new employee orientation. Lacey said that orientation is all online and is part of the onboarding process. The link is sent to the employees from HR after they complete their onboarding paperwork.

- e. Srygler asked how it is determined whether a position is hourly or salaried. Lacey said the determination is based on the Fair Labor Standards Act exemptions. A list of federal questions regarding each position's decision making, discretion, and supervising duties assigned. There can be variations within the same classifications.
- f. Monteiro asked if HR follows up with employees who do not finish orientation. Lacey said that if they are a benefits eligible employee, they do follow up because it impacts them signing up for health insurance. If they are not benefits eligible, HR does not follow up with them.
- g. Morris asked if HR foresees going back to in person onboarding/orientation as Morris felt that the in-person type had more information. Morris also stated that first impressions are important for new hires. Lacey will relay the feedback to the Benefits Director and HR administration. Lacey was not sure if in-person orientation would return with the many changes that are happening in HR currently. Doederlein commented that it was on her radar to work on this as part of her role to better the employee experience.
- h. Kozumplik asked if employees were paid for onboarding and orientation being that they are taking place before employees are hired. Lacey responded that they were not paid at this point.
- i. Hulseberg inquired about information at the HR Director Advisory Committee meeting (this is HR directors from the schools and agencies within the Civil Service system). Lacey said that 95% of testing has been moved to credential assessment. NIU has still not received final audit information from the fall 2021 audit. There was also discussion about the proposal Police Officer lateral transfers from state agency to state agency without retesting.

IX. Shared Governance Reports

A. Board of Trustees – No report

B. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC) – Bohanon reported

- a. The council is in their 10th year of offering the SPS Dependent Scholarship. They are increasing the dollar amount and increasing it to two awards. One award for SPS employee child or family member (increased from \$1000 to \$1200) and one to a student who was impacted by an SPS employee (increased from \$500 to \$750).
- b. SPSC is looking at continuing additional awards in addition to the 10 that are offered through the President's Office.

C. Faculty Senate – Montana reported

- a. Peter Chomentowski and Liz Guess presented on the State Universities Retirement System Member Advisory Committee (SURSMAC) being dissolved because State University Retirement System (SURS) felt that they had fulfilled their purpose. There will be a meeting in early spring to decide the fate of the committee. Nicholson commented that the committee had made no resolutions in 10 years.
- b. An information security overview was given by Fred Williams concentrating on phishing and malicious activity at NIU. i.e. NIU receives over 6.5 million emails per month of which 150,000 are malicious. We all need to be vigilant. Cyber attacks are the third largest global economy behind the U.S. and China. – Think before you click.

D. University Council – Montana reported

- a. Provost Beth Ingram announced that student re-enrollment for spring was 88.3% for freshman and 82.0 % overall, which is up to pre-COVID levels.
- b. George Middlemist the new Chief Financial Officer was introduced.

E. Student Government Association (SGA) – Nicholson reported.

- a. James Ennis is the new Chief of Staff who is a veteran with extensive leadership experience.
- b. SGA has received \$200,00 in additional funding of which \$12,000 has been given to student organizations for engagement and involvement opportunities.
- c. They are traveling to the American Student Government Association.
- d. The State of the Student Body Address will be on February 24th at 3:30 PM.

X. Operating Staff Council Committee Reports

A. Elections and Appointments – No report

B. Legislative Committee – No report

C. Public Relations/Activities – Meyer reported

- a. Names have been provided for review for the Civil Service Dependent Scholarship. There were six applicants.
- b. Confessions of a Rookie will be expanded in the newsletter to Confessions of a Huskie. New questions are being developed.
- c. Johnson presented information about a one-day camp for President's Day for \$20 a day.

D. Workplace Guidance – Srygler reported.

- a. Srygler reminded that the deadline for the newly expanded staff awards is Monday, February 6th.
- b. The committee is looking for feedback from departments on whether they are seeing an improvement in the 33% decline in clerical staff that was reported previously.
- c. Discussions were had about people not being paid in a timely manner. Not allowing employees to work before paperwork is completed would help curb this problem.
- d. OSC is getting involved in the NIU bowling league. Contact Meyer if interested.
- e. Service awards are going to be resumed on Thursday, April 6th.
- f. Nicholson will schedule a meeting with Doederlein to discuss the vacancy process. It is still being reported that student-facing departments are having to lock their doors because of no staff.

E. Civil Service Emergency Fund – Srygler reported

- a. They had one application last month, but they were turned down as the fund is for full-time status employees.
- b. The committee will be posting a comprehensive list of resources on the Emergency Fund website.
- c. Greg Beyer from the School of Music had suggested at University Council that their spring benefit concert funds might be an idea for these funds.

F. Civil Service Celebration Committee – Kozumplik reported

- a. The question was posed as to whether the SPS employees could be invited, and it was decided that would be fine.
- b. A May 15th invitation will be distributed.
- c. Looking for senior leadership to serve.
- d. There will be various activities.
- e. A date for the event will be decided in the future.

G. Council of Councils Ad Hoc Committee – Kozumplik reported

- a. October 20th is still the tentative date for the event. The date will be confirmed sometime in March.
- b. A theme has yet to be determined.

H. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC) – Hulseberg reported

- a. The first quarterly meeting of 2023 was on January 19th and 20th at the System Office in Urbana, IL.
- b. The February Merit Board meeting has been postponed until March. NIU does not have any discharges being brought forward.

- c. HRDAC (Human Resource Director Advisory Council), the DER (Designated Employer Representative) which is Lacey, the IHECHC (Illinois Higher Education Consortium on Human Capital) which is the HR directors minus the Civil Service system directors were described.
- d. Hulseberg was elected Parliamentarian for EAC which also makes Hulseberg chair the Elections Committee.
- e. The Executive Director of SUCSS, Gail Schiesser continues to try to clean up the state statutes and bring clarity to ambiguous rules.
- f. 523 exams have been converted to credential assessments since July 1st bringing the total to over 1000. There is concern in consistency if more than one person does the assessment for one position.

XI. Prior Business

- A. Employment numbers in the Physical Plant; they are down 37 employees. However, many of the Physical Plant jobs have been posted on the HR website (four foreman and six other positions including key control, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, and refrigeration).
- B. Open work orders.
 - a. There are 100s of them, but Ward said that this could be deceiving because there are many preventative maintenance orders in there.
 - b. Foreman do not have time to clear the work orders in the system because they are out on the job and not near a computer.
 - c. There is upwards of \$25 mil. in preventative maintenance projects. Doe mentioned that students on the Fee Committee had suggested having a student fee go towards preventative maintenance, capital improvements, and esthetics.

XII. New Business – None

XIII. Adjournment

Birch moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:19 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Monteiro, Secretary
Operating Staff Council