Minutes
Operating Staff Council
May 3, 2018
Sky Room – 9:00 A. M.
Approved June 7, 2018

Present: Barb Andree, Stacey Bivens, Judy Burgess, Ellen Cabrera, Angelica Gutierrez-Vargas, John Hulseberg, Cindy Kozumplik, Katja Marjetic, Jay Monteiro, Holly Nicholson, Karen Smith, Mary Wyzard

Absent: Pamela Pittman, Jeffry Royce, Patricia Wielert

Guests: Cathy Doederlein, Acting President Lisa Freeman, Sarah Klaper, Frances Mitchell, Pulchratia Smith, Chief of Staff Matt Streb

I. Call to Order
President Andree called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:08 A.M.

II. Roll Call
Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

III. Approval of Agenda
A motion was made by Kozumplik to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by K. Smith and passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of April 5, 2018, minutes
A motion was made by Wyzard to accept the April 5, 2018, minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Burgess and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer’s Report
Andree reported. She explained that amount described as a new allocation under the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship Endowed Fund is actually the money that was given as scholarships this year. The Treasurer’s statement listed a balance remaining in the Council of Councils budget. Andree explained that money is the OSC’s and the council can use any leftover money. Nicholson noted that the balance is higher than expected is still working out ways to pay those students who performed, and faculty who presented at Council of Councils in October. Andree would like to use some of the balance on PR materials for the council said she would ask Wielert to do a line-by-line accounting of the Council of Councils expenditures at the June meeting. A motion was made by Monteiro to accept the Treasurer’s report. The motion was seconded by Hulseberg and passed by unanimous vote.
VI. Visiting Committees/Guests
A. Acting President Lisa Freeman noted that today (May 3, 2018) was the Operating Staff Service Awards Lunch, and wanted to thank all operating staff for the many ways we contribute through shared governance. Staff keep campus running, and parents trust us with their children when they send them to NIU. She said she appreciates how we advocate in the public square. Freeman mentioned that she saw Evan Wittke at a donor event, and shared that Evan is graduating from medical school next week. Evan twice received the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship Award.

B. Chief of Staff Matt Streb started by talking about the state budget. Streb said there is not one yet, but it’s still early in the process since the legislative session does not end until May 31. Streb said that there are people who believe that there will be a budget (unlike last year). No one wants a repeat of last year, since the absence of a budget could lead to the loss of accreditation of Illinois higher education institutions, and it is an election year. Last year 16 Republicans voted to override the governor’s veto, and this year there are several free-agents (legislators not running for re-election). Streb said that Governor Rauner has proposed $81.9 million in funding for NIU, which is what we received in FY 2015. However, what we actually receive will likely be below that amount. There has been talk of a plan that would make universities take on the responsibility for paying ¼ of employees’ pensions and their healthcare costs. That would bankrupt the universities. Fortunately, there is no support for a plan like this. We need stable, predictable funding. Streb believes that the state budget will look similar to last year’s, and it will not address the pension issue. He stated that the attitude toward higher education has changed. It used to be regarded as a public good, but is now seen as wasteful. Government wants to see cuts, stewardship, accountability, performance-based funding, and to revisit the funding formula.

Streb also discussed enrollment. Illinois is second only to New Jersey in sending college students out of state. NIU’s top competitors are students who choose not to go to college. He considers the idea of closing or consolidating college campuses to be a lot of talk and does not see it happening. From a political standpoint this would be difficult to do. He clarified that no one has ever talked about shutting down NIU. Andree thanked Dr. Freeman and Dr. Streb for listening to operating staff concerns. Hulseberg asked for an update on the Ethics Officer position search. There was one acceptable candidate, however their home institution made a very competitive retention offer. Streb commented that with retirements here at NIU, there is thought about putting money into an ethics officer position/portfolio, and there will be a new
search. There are two finalists for the Legislative Liaison Representative position in Springfield. Streb finished by saying that there had been a bill in committee that would allow community colleges the opportunity to offer four-year nursing degrees. This was defeated.

VII. Public Comment
None

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence
A. Andree shared the news that she is retiring effective June 30, 2018.

B. Andree also said that AFSCME 1890 ratified its first bargaining agreement with NIU on May 1. The contract will be presented for approval to the Board of Trustees at its May 10, 2018, meeting. Once approved, the contract will be in effect for five years. Dues for union members will be $43.83 per month, while those employees who are not in the union, but whose positions are covered by the bargaining unit will pay a fair share amount of approximately $35.00 per month.

C. K. Smith announced that Benefits Choice period is occurring May 1 through May 31, 2018. There will be no changes in choices or premiums. For those employees who want to make changes to their insurance and do not have access to a computer, there are computers available at Human Resource Services.

D. P. Smith gave an update on lay-off notices. Some of the notices were the result of the Holmes Student Center renovation, the outsourcing of the bookstore, and budgetary concerns. Less than five employees out of 32 are actually leaving the university. Some chose to retire, or did not accept reassignment. Smith also reminded meeting attendees that the State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS) office will be conducting an audit of NIU in late June.

IX. Shared Governance Reports
A. Board of Trustees
No report. The Board’s next meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2018.

B. Faculty Senate
Andree reported. Professor Therese Arado from the NIU College of Law Library was elected President of Faculty Senate at the April 25, 2018, meeting.

C. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)
Doederlein reported. SPS Council has completed its elections for the coming
year, and Doederlein will continue as president.

D. University Council
Met May 2, 2018. Professor Arado is now Executive Secretary of University Council, effective July 1, 2018, as well as President of Faculty Senate. There was a discussion concerning e-mail and web security. Anyone who receives a suspicious e-mail should either forward it or send it as an attachment to abuse@niu.edu. During the meeting a vote was taken which resulted in adding one more representative from operating staff and one more from supportive professional staff to the Resources, Space, and Budget Committee.

E. University Advisory Committee (UAC)
No report

X. Committee Reports
A. Elections and Appointments
Nicholson reported. The OSC election ballot is out until May 11, 2018. There are 15 candidates for 11 positions (eight members and three alternates).

B. Employee Morale
Kozumplik reported. The committee talked about Executive Vice President and Provost Chris McCord’s concerns about the Take a Day, Give a Day Proposal. Kozumplik and Smith discussed meeting with a member of the Board of Trustees who works at First National Bank, Tim Struthers. Kozumplik has a friend who works there and is given time off work to volunteer. Kozumplik has been working on this proposal for two years. McCord was surprised that the proposal did not have to go through Dr. Freeman first before talking to a trustee.
K. Smith stated that the Morale Committee has not actually been told no.

C. Legislative Committee
Marjetic reported. The committee met April 23, 2018. There was not a quorum, so no vote could be taken. However, the committee agreed that typos in the OSC’s bylaws need to be corrected, and discussed the similarities in tasks between the OSC Secretary and the OSC/SPSC Administrative Aide’s position descriptions.

D. Public Relations/Activities
Monteiro reported. The meeting was brief. The committee discussed the recipients of the Outstanding Service Award, who will be responsible for the *Northern Staff News*, and who would chair the Civil Service Celebration planning committee. The co-chairs for this event are Pat Wielert and Candy Buie. Andree talked about the Giving Project. Anyone who would like to
participate is welcome. Volunteers make scarves, hats, blankets, wash cloths, mittens, fleece hats, and soap socks. The items produced are donated to the Huskie Food Pantry. The group meets Thursdays from noon until 1:00 in the Glidden Room in the Holmes Student Center. Once renovations begin in the Holmes Student Center, the new meeting location will be Founders Memorial Library.

E. Workplace Issues
Cabrera reported. The committee discussed the upcoming lay-offs and outsourcing of the bookstore at the Holmes Student Center. The members would like to prepare a resource kit in the event that this situation repeats itself. This kit would contain useful and appropriate information for employees on who to contact, which office to go to, with reminders to contact their union representative or the Operating Staff Personnel Advisor for advice. Cabrera also mentioned that she was having difficulty placing textbook orders for faculty, because she had not been informed of new procedures due to the upcoming closure of the bookstore. It was suggested that she contact Ian Crone at the Holmes Student Center or Mike Stang in Student Affairs.

F. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)
No report, although it was announced that Dana Hughes from the Graduate School was the recipient of the Pat Siebrasse Award. She received the award at the Administrative Professionals Day Breakfast on April 25.

G. EAC (Employee Advisory Committee)
Hulseberg reported. He attended his first EAC meeting on April 18-19 at Illinois State University. In addition to the EAC meeting, there was a joint meeting with university human resource directors. EAC discussed audits and transitioning PAA (academic professional) positions to civil service, extra help workers, and the effectiveness of last chance agreements as well as their legality. Hulseberg noted that University of Illinois allows clerical workers to conduct their own desk audits. The next EAC meeting will take place July 12-13 at University of Illinois at Chicago.

XI. Prior Business
None

XII. New Business
A. There was discussion and a decision to support the Operating Staff Personnel Advisor (OSPA) position. In recent budget proposals made by NIU’s administration, the Supportive Professional Staff and OSPAs could be eliminated and combined into one personnel advisor position that would serve
faculty, SPS and OS. In response, University Council leadership, SPSC, OSC, and members of the Resource, Space and Budget Committee developed a proposed change to Article 9 of the University Council bylaws that would maintain the three advisor positions at a fixed additional pay rate at a lower rate than is currently being paid.

Discussion regarding the OSPA position began. K. Smith offered an opinion to give up the OSPA position for a year, then revisit it. If the position is still necessary, then the OSC could ask to have it reinstated. Several people were hesitant to do that. The position continues to be successful. In addition, it took a great deal of time, effort and paperwork to get the position established, and the concern was expressed that if we give up the position, we will not get it back again.

B. Presidential Search Planning Committee
Wyzard reported. The committee met April 15, and May 15 will be its last meeting. Many points of pride items need to be updated. The committee has called other universities to find out how they handled their presidential searches. The Presidential Search Planning Committee will report to the Board of Trustees at the Board’s June meeting.

XIII. Adjournment
A motion was made by Wyzard to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Smith and passed by unanimous vote.
The meeting adjourned at 11:17 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Bivens, Secretary
Operating Staff Council