

Staff Association Minutes
08/10/16

Senators Present:

Jackie Burns, Amy Foley, Derek Evans, John Gregory, Jessica Frogge, Fred Nesslage, Barb Harris, Tara Stoll, Nick Edwards, Carol Hare, Louise Mills, Lisa May, Eric Kramer, Jena Williams

Senators Absent:

Christina Lund

Staff Present:

Dawn Baker, Jody King, Marissa Steimel, Jessica Poet, Teresa Crist, Jean Foster, Alex Owens, Karen Luke

Guests (Administration) Present:

Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Dr. Doug Davenport, Dr. Cale Fessler, Colleen Kowich, Shana Meyer

Staff Association President Tara Stoll called the meeting to order.

Barb Harris used an audio recorder for the purpose of minutes, Tara indicated this for those present.

Welcome and Introductions:

- Tara Stoll welcomed everyone back from a busy summer, and asked those administrators present to begin their reports.

Report of Dr. Vartabedian:

- The Kansas City Chiefs camp is going well. The players are currently on a break for a pre-season game, but will be back on campus for the last few days of camp. Weather has been a bit strange, resulting in some cancelled practices; We have estimated that 4,000-5,000 people have attended the weekend events. We are at the end of the second year of our three year contract with the Chiefs' organization, negotiations are under way regarding the next contract. The upcoming MWSU employee Chiefs camp tailgate will be on Tuesday, August 16; Chiefs aprons will be given out that day. Employees are invited to visit the tent between 8:15-10:30am for breakfast, to see the players and experience the camp. Any concerns regarding the Chiefs camp should be directed to the President's office.
- Faculty Plan Week will begin with General Session on Monday, August 22nd at 9:00am, followed by the Family Picnic that afternoon beginning at 4:30pm in Fulkerson.
- News: Dr. Vartabedian stated that we have lots of good news to come, but we also face some challenges --- namely low enrollment and retention. Royal and Company consultants have been hired to assist us with enrollment issues. They have assisted other campuses with similar issues and have a good reputation.

- Any questions or concerns, Dr. Vartabedian invited staff to phone or email his office.

Report of Dr. Jeanne Daffron by Dr. Doug Davenport:

- To follow-up on what Dr. Vartabedian said, Dr. Davenport stated that the marketing firm of Royal and Company has been brought on board to consult and assist with regards to enrollment and retention. The administration anticipates positive results from this relationship.
- AWC (“admitted with conditions”) students, who are less than full-time are no longer allowed to live in the dorms(as of this past year); We know that we have taken a hit from this, but the *quality* of students is getting better.
- HLC (Higher Learning Commission) site visit will be Oct. 3rd through 5th. This is an institutional accreditation visit. A report was submitted by the Provost’s Office, which included a total of 63 documents. Various campus employees – faculty and staff alike -- may be asked to participate in this site visit. The administration is optimistic about the visit. Once the Commission sends their desired agenda and list of panel needs, the Provost’s Office will be in touch.

Report of Dr. Cale Fessler:

- The firm conducting the audit is scheduled to be here from September 6 - 23. We are going with a new firm this year. The Financial Aid audit is already complete, Accounting is next, and then the report will go to the Board of Governors in October.
- I.T.S. – I.T. and Fred have been working with Suddenlink to expand the wireless service in the dorms; the Chiefs players are currently enjoying that opportunity; The plans are to have everything complete by the time students return for fall semester.
- Looney Pool: The pool is soon to be finished, with a ribbon cutting and other events planned.
- Potter Hall renovations are wrapping up.
- Blum Union renovations are moving along and looking good; Shana (Meyer) has shared those plans previously.
- Spratt Stadium renovations are also wrapping up, gearing up for the first home game on September 1st. Features include the new scoreboard, a victory plaza and a new sculpture.
- Human Resources: Dr. Fessler reported that our benefits renewal is moving along, we have the bids, and no increases in cost or plan changes are projected.

Report of Jerry Pickman by Colleen Kowich:

- Griffon Day of Service will be Saturday, August 27th; the Alumni Association is slated to participate. Faculty and staff are also welcome to participate; everyone is encouraged to make it a global day of service.
- Colleen distributed a handout detailing the differences between the Foundation and Development, their different duties, etc. Anyone who did not receive a copy of this handout and has questions may contact Colleen(Kowich) or Jerry (Pickman) via phone or email.

Report of Shana Meyer:

- Student Affairs is gearing up for a “Week of Welcome”.
 - Western Warm-Up will take place August 29th outside of the Blum Student Union from 11:00am-1:00pm; the application may be found online. A barbeque will also be hosted by the Greek rock, in front of the dorms.
 - Tuesday, August 30, 2016 will be the ribbon cutting for the completion of the Looney pool; We are going to be recognizing and honoring the memory of Senator Eagleton, as well as other partners and supporters who made this possible.
 - On August 31st, campus will host a pool party kick-off for students.
 - Thursday, September 1st will be the first Griffon home game at the new stadium, with a tailgate beforehand.
- Blum Student Union: The work is ongoing, lots of space has been gained! Student Affairs is hopeful that this will help with recruitment of more international students. The food court has had some changes; Zoca (Mexican) will replace the Wok.
- Trails West: Shana is co-chairing Trails West this year, and they are still looking for volunteers. Trails West will run the weekend of August 19th – 21st, down at Civic Park, behind St. Joseph City Hall. They will take all volunteers – college students, high school students needing volunteer hours, etc. Buttons can be purchased ahead of time for \$8, and are good for both days, children 10 and under may enter for free. Volunteers are needed in the children’s activity tent, as well as in hospitality booths and locations.

Report of Sally Sanders by Carol Hare:

- The C3 Committee has been formed and they are meeting. They are currently trying to identify particular positions for Fox-Lawson to analyze. Discussion also continues with regards to those positions which may be changing from exempt to non-exempt come December, due to changes in Federal law.
- Reminder from Public Safety: It is time to renew your hang tag for parking! Please do so by August 31st.
- Wellness Program: The new initiatives put together by Sara Freemyer have been well-received, keep an eye on your email for more good things to come.
- Workplace Answers/Title IX Training: Everyone is reminded to log in and complete the required Title IX training.

Question from Tara Stoll: What is the timeline for C3?

Response from Carol: There is no current timeline.

Report of Kurt McGuffin by Brandt Shields, Director of External Relations:

- Brandt reminded everyone of the first big game in the new Spratt Stadium Thursday night, September 1st; all employees and their families are welcome to come cheer on the Griffs! As part of this grand opening event, we will host our first ever “Bandamonium”

event to kick things off. Bands from around the area will fill the field in celebration of the new stadium and the 2016 season opener.

Staff Senate Reports:

Newly elected President Tara Stoll opened the Staff portion of the meeting by welcoming the newly elected Staff Senators and thanking those who are either outgoing or continuing. Past President Carol Hare will serve as ex-officio on this next year's Senate (per the Staff Constitution and Bylaws).

Committee Reports:

- First Vice-President, Barb Harris, reported on progress being made with regards to this year's Staff Association committees. Things are moving along, but several volunteers are still needed, especially on the Special Events Committee. Ideally, we like to see at least 10 or more people serve on this committee, so that the load may be shared. This committee mainly handles the winter and spring retreats, which do take planning and coordination. We also still need to fill some spots on the Professional Development and Constitution and Bylaws Committees.

New Business:

- The Professional Development Committee is currently looking for online training resources that could be utilized to serve the entire University staff. Tara is currently doing research on this. Jessica Frogge suggested Fred Pryor, as she has had very positive experiences with them, they offer a variety of subjects. Jessica's department has a yearly program membership (requires more than 10 people enrolled, at \$179 per person). Tara appreciated the input and said she would look into it.
- Executive Committee has been discussing the upcoming potential changes in positions from exempt to non-exempt(due to new federal law). The question was posed --- How important is it to Staff Association members that we maintain a certain balance on all committees (and in executive officer positions) with regards to the Exempt/Non-Exempt status issue?
 - A brief electronic survey is in the works, to be sent out to all Staff Association members, to assess the general sentiment of MWSU staff employees on this issue.
 - In earlier days of the Staff Association (when the Support Staff and Professional Staff were combined into one association), a certain level of exempt/non-exempt representation was established in our Constitution and Bylaws. Many now feel this distinction may no longer be necessary, especially in terms of the upcoming change in employment laws, as well as the increasing challenge of filling Staff Association committees.
 - Per Carol Hare, a projected 126 positions may be affected by the new labor standards between now and December 1st; neither salaries nor leave accrual will

be altered; for many it may be as simple as a change in classification that will primarily affect Human Resources and Payroll.

- If we as an Association decide that the exempt/non-exempt designation is not important in terms of committee participation, the Constitution and Bylaws will need to be altered.

President's Report – Tara Stoll:

- The campus United Way campaign will launch on Monday, August 22nd at General Session and at the Family Picnic.

First Vice President's Report – Barb Harris:

- The Staff Association operating budget remains at \$2,400 for the 2016-2017 year, with a carryforward amount of \$343.11 that will post to the budget at a later date.
- The Foundation has graciously agreed to give us an increase in our yearly funds. We are now at \$7,000 to be put towards professional development and events. This is an increase of \$2,000 from last year.

Other:

- 2nd Vice-President Nick Edwards: Professional Development requests are already in motion, ½ of the money specifically allocated for Staff Professional has already been utilized.
- Welcoming Committee – Jackie Burns: We welcomed three new employees in Admissions!
- Brandt Shields is currently working with Dixie Williams(Admissions), to create a system for faculty and/or staff to serve as new student ambassadors during the first week of classes. The idea behind this is help orientate new students to our campus and make them feel welcome. This is a fresh idea in the making, so it may or may not be up and running for this semester – but could have potential for implementation in future semesters.
- Valuing People AQUIP Committee – Dr. Amy Foley: Amy Foley continues to serve as the Staff representative on the Valuing People AQUIP Action Committee. This committee falls under a much larger committee which also includes Fred Nesslage and Susan Bracciano, among others.
- Tara mentioned that we are looking into the possibility and cost of ordering a Staff Association tablecloth/banner for use at various events.
- Fred Nesslage reported that he has been working extensively with Suddenlink to increase services for our students in the dorms. The students may now upgrade their service, if they so desire. The students would need to set up their individual (added) accounts on their own, at the Suddenlink offices.

Next Association Meeting – Wednesday, September 14, 2016, 3:00pm, Blum 220.

Motion to adjourn by Barb Harris.

Seconded by Nick Edwards.

ADJOURNED

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Harris

First Vice-President