

Staff Association Minutes
03/14/18

Senators Present: Fred Nesslage, Barb Harris, Jackie Burns, Jessica Frogge, Carol Hare, Christina Lund, Lisa May, Derek Evans, Andrea Collins-Keller, Hawley Rumpf

Senators Absent: Kathy Kelly, Eric Kramer, Louise Mills, Jessica Poet, Tara Stoll, Jena Williams

Staff Present: Dawn Baker, Blair Carmichael

Guests (Administration) Present: Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Dr. Cale Fessler, Dr. Jeanne Daffron, Shana Meyer, Sara Freemyer

Welcome and Introductions:

- Staff President Fred Nesslage called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked those administrators present to begin their reports.

Report of Dr. Vartabedian:

- Dr. Vartabedian began by mentioning the summer 2018 schedule --- Most campus offices will be closed on Fridays, June 1 - July 13(June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22, June 29, July 6 & July 13). The campus will also be closed July 4th and 5th, creating what the President is calling a mid-summer break from July 4th through 8th.
- Dr. Vartabedian has been discussing with Dr. Cale Fessler and Sara Freemyer the possibility of a change in the payroll process for some employees --- to be discussed in detail shortly by Dr. Fessler; Dr. Vartabedian wanted to first bring it to Staff Senate, to get an idea of how it might affect staff employees; More to be explained shortly by Dr. Fessler.
- Report from Jefferson City: Dr. Vartabedian stated that from their experience visiting the Capital, the General Assembly is in support of Higher Education, and hopefully plan to minimize the Governor's cuts or wipe them out completely; Thus far, they have made good on their promises.
- Position Searches: We are currently undergoing two high-profile searches --- Director of Physical Plant and Men's Basketball Coach; Coach candidates will be on campus next week, and the Physical Plant Director search is in progress.
- Board of Governors: The President announced that the February Board of Governors meeting has been rescheduled for 8:00am on Friday, March 23rd. This meeting was cancelled last month due to the ice storm.
- Dr. Vartabedian extended an invitation to Senators for an Appreciation get-together/reception, to be held on Thursday, March 29th from 4:30-6:00pm in the Hall of Fame Room at Spratt Stadium.

Report of Dr. Jeanne Daffron:

- Dr. Daffron discussed the new CORE 42 transfer policy coming down from the State, that it applies to all transfer students; Transfer students will fall under one General Studies Curriculum, while new/traditional students will fall under another; Use of

advising tools(GPS, Goldlink, etc) will be even more important now for those in academics; Eventually, there will two different sets of CORE 42 rules posted to the web site, as well as in Griffon GPS.

- Dr. Daffron also discussed the Missouri Western change from 124 total hours required on a Bachelor's degree to 120; Some programs will still require more than the suggested 120, dependent upon program needs, accreditation, etc; 120 total hours is simply the new minimum requirement to obtain a Bachelor's degree; Missouri Western is one of the last institutions in the state to change this.
- Spring Commencement will once again take place in Spratt Stadium, Saturday, May 5th, at 11:00am; Backup plans will be different this year, Dr. Daffron asked everyone to refer students to the Academic Affairs/Commencement web site; Looney Fieldhouse is under construction this year, so if we were to have inclement weather, the result would be multiple ceremonies held in Fulkerson.

Report of Dr. Cale Fessler:

- Dr. Fessler announced that Bryan Adkins from the St. Joseph School District and John Spencer from MidAmerica Nazarene University are the final two candidates in the running for Director of the Physical Plant; both seem to be good candidates with good backgrounds and working history.
- Payroll: Dr. Fessler stated that he, Director of Human Resources Sara Freemyer and Dr. Vartabedian have been discussing the idea of **changing all Non-Exempt/hourly positions** from the current bi-weekly payroll system back to a monthly(once-a-month) system; The idea behind this thought was to try and reduce workload for those in the Payroll Office, since the University is not filling the Assistant Payroll position; Currently, that office runs several payrolls per month, and this is an attempt to try to streamline that position(just as a position in HR will not be filled); Dr. Fessler is hoping to see some cost savings from this, to become more efficient with less staff; If this were to be adopted, the first monthly payroll(for NON-Exempt/hourly employees) would be September; There would be three checks paid out to NE employees in August, and then the next check received would be at the end of September; This *only* would affect hourly/Non-Exempt employees; Dr. Fessler stated that they are wanting less manual processing and more automated processing, for cost savings and efficiency; Dr. Fessler then opened up the floor for questions:
 - Jessica Frogge stated that this change would be a hardship for many hourly employees, as many of them are already living paycheck-to-paycheck; being paid once a month would make things that much more difficult, going from roughly 26 pay periods down to 12;
 - As discussion continued, Hawley Rumpf asked about the history of this, as at one time, all employees(Exempt and Non-Exempt) were paid once a month; Barb Harris responded, saying that at that time, Non-Exempt employees were told by those in Payroll and Human Resources that the University had to go to a bi-weekly system, because we were supposedly out of compliance with the law; However, it appears (now) as though that was not the case; That switch was made, however, and we have been on the bi-weekly system for hourly/Non-Exempt employees since that time.

- Barb Harris stated that for herself, on a personal level, it would be very difficult going back to a once-a-month cycle now that they have kids to think about; Also it would be a challenge to work with vendors to try and switch billing due dates to accommodate this payroll change(it was difficult the first time around).
- Dawn Baker agreed and said that as an hourly employee with a spouse who also serves the University as an hourly employee, this would create hardship for them; It would be difficult for many people.
- It was asked of Dr. Fessler what cost savings would be gained from this move, rather than simply filling the Assistant Payroll position, but no hard numbers were offered in response.
- Jackie Burns asked if this would affect flex time for these employees; Sara Freemyer stated that the process would essentially remain the same(flex time would need to be taken by the end of that particular payroll cycle, i.e., within that month).
- Dr. Fessler and Sara stated that not all details have been dealt with or figured out yet; An employee's monthly check would reflect those hours worked within that particular month;
 - When asked about end-of-month sick days, extra hours worked, etc, Sara stated that there was still quite a bit to look at before this could be implemented.
- Jessica Frogge stated that it was a bit frustrating, that it seemed as if those on the lower part of the ladder, those receiving the least pay, were being asked to sacrifice more than others, and that it was a bit concerning.
- Dr. Vartabedian responded, saying that this was why he wanted to bring the subject up with Staff Senate, to get a feel for what employees thought of the idea, and how it might affect them.
- Jessica then asked whether the administration might consider polling all hourly/Non-Exempt employees, to make certain that all those affected were reached out to and had a chance to comment on it.
- Dr. Vartabedian and Dr. Fessler responded with a "Yes," and Dr. Vartabedian said that they would send out an email with this information, including a brief survey --- just to the Non-Exempt employees --- to gain genuine feedback before they make any final decisions on whether or not to proceed with this plan.

End of discussion, Staff President Fred Nesslage thanked the administration for their time.

Old Staff Association Business

- No quorum present, therefore past meeting minutes could not be approved. A vote will be taken at a later date via email to the Senators.
- Valuing Employees - D2/D3 position inclusion discussion: Discussion continued regarding the inclusion of the D2/D3 levels of employees in the Staff Association, since they have never had representation; Many feel comfortable with the idea of allowing these individuals to participate in Staff Association activities(dependent upon available budget), but are not comfortable having supervisors at the meetings; There is a general feeling that their presence might hinder the Senate's purpose and the manner in which we operate; There is a fear that people will not feel as though they may speak freely;

Some constituents are afraid of openly opposing their supervisors on various topics. Association President Fred Nesslage declared this discussion tabled for now, to be addressed at the next monthly Association meeting.

Staff Association Committee Reports

Constitution & Bylaws:

- Derek Evans stated that Robin Kelly will serve as C&B chair; Fred Nesslage said that he will be charging them with some things to work on.

Welcoming Committee:

- Jackie Burns stated that they welcomed 12 new employees over the course of the past two months:

January Hires

Claudia Baer – Student Employment Coordinator, Career Development

Craig Malita – Night Dispatcher/Clery Compliance Coordinator, University Police

Jane Robertson-Johnston – Administrative Support Assistant, Physical Plant

David Brown – Assistant Football Coach, Athletics

Tyler Ball – Police Officer, University Police

William Davis – Police Officer, University Police

Derek Fulton – Assistant Football Coach, Athletics

Danielle Gibson – Administrative Assistant, Financial Aid

Angela Sanders – Accountant, Foundation

February Hires

Aaron Gann – HVAC/R Technician – Physical Plant

Sagan Myers – Unit Secretary for WRDCC – Western Institute

Andre Crenshaw – Assistant Football Coach – Athletics

Election:

- Should begin meeting between now and the next Association meeting.

Grievance:

- Carol Hare spoke of staff who have been specifically affected by the newly revised overtime policy; These particular employees are opposing the change to a straight time-for-time system(as opposed to the prior time and a half, etc); Committee Chair Kathy Kelly told them she would work with them should they choose to move forward with this.

Professional Development:

- Jackie Burns had nothing to report, as no individual funds have been given out for quite some time.

Special Events:

- Christina Lund stated that the LinkedIn workshop went well, and that there is a potential summer workshop opportunity. Members were also reminded by Jessica Frogge to take

advantage of the Student Affairs "Ready to Learn" series. The committee is getting started on plans for a late spring or summer retreat.

Advantage:

- Eric Kramer stated that Chad Edwards would like to find two or three more volunteers to serve on the Advantage committee. They have met once, and are assessing their options for spring and summertime fund raising.

President's Report – Fred Nesslage

- Board of Governors has been rescheduled to Friday, March 23rd at 8:00am, due to the icy weather.
- President Nesslage reminded everyone of the Benefits Wellness Screenings coming up on March 19 and 20, 2018.
- Everyone was reminded of the University's plan to switch to a four day work week for particular dates this summer; In addition to Fridays off through mid-July, there will be a mid-summer break around the 4th of July.
- Senators were reminded of the Senate appreciation function, to be hosted by Dr. Vartabedian on March 29th from 4:30-6:00pm at Spratt Stadium.

First Vice President's Report – Barb Harris

- At present, the Staff budget is sitting at balance of \$2,632.18 in operating, and our remaining Foundation allocation is \$1,952.79. Angela Sanders, new Foundation accountant, is working to pinpoint and process any outstanding winter retreat related remittances. Barb will update Exec and the Special Events committee once that information is available.

Time ran out, no quorum was available to vote for adjournment. Fred therefore called the meeting to a close.

Next Staff Association meeting will be on Wednesday, April 11th at 3:00pm.