

Staff Association Minutes

04/12/17

Senators Present: Jackie Burns, Nick Edwards, Derek Evans, Amy Foley, Jessica Frogge, Carol Hare, Barb Harris, Eric Kramer, Christina Lund, Fred Nesslage, Hawley Rumpf, Tara Stoll, Jena Williams

Senators Absent: John Gregory, Lisa May, Louise Mills

Staff Present: Michelle Diaz, Kathy Kelly, Jennie McDonald

Guests (Administration) Present: Jeanne Daffron, Cale Fessler, Elise Hepworth, Sally Sanders, Robert Vartabedian,

Welcome and Introductions:

- Staff President Tara Stoll called the meeting to order. She welcomed everyone and asked those administrators present to begin their reports.

Report of Dr. Vartabedian:

- Dr. Vartabedian began by discussing the Budget Advisory Council, which was created to review and assess the current budget situation that we face as a university, and to make suggestions and/or budget-related plans with regards to these issues. Dr. Vartabedian stated that the BAC has agreed to some cuts, including one potential cut coming very soon which should not affect employees.
 - Announcements will be going out to campus very soon regarding the fact that we will experiment with a 4-day work week this coming June 2017. The best compromise for this experiment was the month of June, as it avoids conflicts with Chiefs camp and other activities taking place in July and August. Campus will officially be closed June 9, 16, 23 and 30(all Fridays). Employees will need to get their full 37.5 hours into those 4 day weeks(variations on 9 or 9.5 hour days). A more detailed email will be forthcoming from Sally Sanders in Human Resources within the next few days.
 - Employees are to note that campus will also be closed on Monday, July 3rd, thus creating a 5-day weekend for all(as campus will be closed Friday, June 30th, Monday, July 3rd and Tuesday, July 4th); Dr. Vartabedian referred this as a “midsummer break.”
 - Dr. Vartabedian stated that the Fridays off are truly an experiment; We do not fully know how much cost savings there will be; We have already experience some utility cost savings by signing on with Snyder Electric, so it is unknown if closing Fridays in June will improve upon this. The buildings will not be fully

“locked down” in the full sense of the term; faculty coming in to work and do research will not be kicked out. They will, however, need to bring their own fan to keep cool, etc.

- President Vartabedian reminded all Senators that he and Mrs. Vartabedian will be hosting an appreciation reception for Faculty Senators and Staff Senators at their home on Thursday, April 20th beginning at 5:00pm. He encouraged all Senators to attend, please RSVP to Kim Sigrist by Monday, April 17th.

Report of Dr. Cale Fessler:

- Dr. Fessler stated that there will be a larger communication forthcoming regarding budgetary and policy changes, as well as a very specific message from Sally Sanders regarding the June 4-day work week issues.
- Budget Advisory Council will hold their next meeting on April 20th; This group exist to help advise the President and make suggestions regarding the overall university budget, as well as come up with ideas for generation of revenue; Representatives from various areas on campus serve on this council;
 - A BAC web site has been developed. It is up and running; intended to be a central repository for all things budget related, ongoing discussions, changes, etc.
 - Dr. Fessler stated that there were several changes coming via personnel attrition, positions being left opened or combined with other existing positions; Some employees may have to double-up on their job duties, etc.
 - With regards to land development pursuits, Dr. Fessler stated that there is an RFQ for services out for the 50th and Mitchell area; revenue generated there would be long-term.
 - It was stated that unless something drastically changes, we will go for a 2.4% CPI tuition increase; The Governor’s office has threatened future cuts to those who go higher or request a waiver; Harris Stowe State College and Lincoln University are committed to pushing beyond that for the waiver, and potentially have a better chance at this than the rest.
- Board of Governors – We are three Board members short right now; The Governor seems to be dangling these positions, several up & coming chancellors and presidents are choosing to move on out of pure frustration. We should have an answer regarding the Board by April 25th; those members are needed in order for the Board to cast a majority vote.
- The University is currently looking into a possible partnership with the Missouri Theatre, since the Potter Hall campaign is proving a bit of a challenge right now; Internal constituents are not as excited about this idea as the President; The Missouri Theatre is needing funding support for equipment and other building needs; Discussion under way re: possibly doing one large production a year there, in response to the Potter project being slow to get off the ground; Phase I - \$5 million for the architectural work, Phase II - \$10 million for state-of-the-art performing facility + architectural.
- Questions for Dr. Fessler:

- Kathy Kelly asked what the projected savings were for closing Fridays in summer? Dr. Fessler and Dr. Vartabedian responded that they projected a \$20,000 savings for the month of June. Dr. Fessler stated that we will have to wait and see how June goes, and then re-evaluate things come July; It's worth trying something!
- Susan Deering asked about access to certain building with regards to student projects and such? Dr. Daffron responded that discussion has begun and will continue with regards to particular areas' needs, etc. Susan stated that the issue of the 5-day mid-summer break would be something the Campus P.D. would need to address.
- Tara Stoll asked how people might express concerns to the BAC? Dr. Fessler requested all employees to please bring their ideas forward to anyone on the Budget Advisory Council, all ideas are welcome.
- Tara Stoll also stated that Senators have been picking up on a lot of fear regarding potential job losses, and asked Dr. Fessler to speak to that concern. Dr. Fessler stated that the BAC is looking into personnel costs, as well as benefits, reviewing positions and personnel lines for cost savings; Few budgets have ever come back from prior cuts; Open positions will remain open or unfilled.
 - Dr. Vartabedian stated that the administration tried mass written communications to internal constituents when this all began; The first communication stated that loss of employment was not being discussed specific to the withhold. However, after the Governor's cuts, this may be coming. The President stated that he does not want employees to get nervous, but want to be upfront and honest regarding the current situation at hand, and wants to keep people aware. Per his conversation with Roy Blunt, it seems as though it is going to take some time to figure out the current Governor, with regards to his attitude and his plans for the State.
 - Dr. Daffron stated that tuition is a good ½ or more of the overall university operating budget now (unlike the old days). Tuition now makes up over 60% of our overall budget, whereas in years past, there was a time when it was only 20%, due to the benefit of State appropriations and funding. As tuition has gone up, our overall budget really hasn't increased. Dr. Daffron encouraged employees to please share this information, should anyone hear students or others expressing concerns over raised tuition, so that they may better understand the circumstances. The use of Royal & Company seems to be helping; there are high hopes that it this relationship will continue to help grow revenue by bringing in more students.
 - Jackie Burns asked if there was any way for Missouri Western to make money off of the upcoming eclipse in August? Dr. Fessler responded, stating that unfortunately, the timing of it is not good, with the end of Chiefs camp, the

start of Griffon Edge and students coming, etc. We do not have the manpower for offices to cover it all. A few select on-campus events are planned, but nothing major.

- Dr. Daffron added that it was hard to plan for such an event, with such unknown quantities of people coming in; How much do we have to invest in such an event, in order to bring in the revenue we need to call it successful?
 - Nick Edwards asked whether campus food service would be open that day, as there are projected to be busloads of people being brought to campus. He also mentioned the students living on campus.
 - Dr. Vartabedian responded, stating that PR Director Jomel Nichols knows most of the information regarding the eclipse events on campus, as well as what will be happening at the Planetarium. General Session will be postponed and rescheduled due to the eclipse. The St Joseph School District and other area schools will not be in session that day.
 - Eric Kramer asked about the Chiefs camp, and whether there will ever be an opportunity to make money there? Dr. Fessler responded with a firm “No,” stating that the earliest discussion on the next round of negotiations will not be until 2018(i.e., after the next season has ended).
- Tara Stoll thanked everyone for their input and questions on these topics.

Report of Sally Sanders:

- Sally thanked everyone for participating in the wellness screening this year; Sara Freemyer’s hard work paid off! She was able to obtain external funding for the Garmin Vivo Fit incentives, which helped with employee attendance and participation.
- The Labor Market Survey draft report was received; We were asked for some clarifications on some things; As far as organizational structure we are not as far off from other like businesses and institutions as we thought.
- Sally reminded everyone of the Retirement and Faculty/Staff Awards Reception coming up on Tuesday, May 2nd, and encouraged all to attend and show support for their colleagues.
 - Dr. Vartabedian mentioned that he attended the Foundation reception for benefactors yesterday evening, where a high ranking Blue Cross Blue Shield representative hinted to him that as a business, they might want to do more in support of higher education.

Tara thanked all administrators for attending, for their input, and for their willingness to answer questions.

Old Staff Association Business

- **Exempt/Non-Exempt language discussion and vote:** It was made clear by Barb Harris and Tara Stoll that it was proposed that the only proposed language change in the Staff Constitution and Bylaws with regards to Exempt and Non-Exempt employees be in terms of Committee make-up. This proposal came about as a result of Senators communicating with their constituents, after prior discussion among Exec Committee members and Senators regarding staff participation in the Association versus the need for the specific rules regarding exempt and non-exempt representation on the Senate, Executive Committee and standing Association committees. Based on feedback from Association members, it was decided to move forward with the proposed change in committee structure. Barb and Tara explained that perhaps other areas of this conversation might be visited once again down the road, but for now, the vote concerned committees only. The idea behind changing the required number of committee reps was to loosen up restrictions, so as to allow for further participation from Association members.
- **Proposed new language:**
The Missouri Western State University Staff Association will modify “exempt” and “nonexempt” language in the Staff Association Constitution and Staff Association Bylaws, as it relates to Committee qualifications, stating that Committee membership must contain at least 1 (one) exempt and at least 1 (one) non-exempt Staff Member.
 - Motion was made by Barb Harris, seconded by Tara Stoll, Motion passed.
 - Tara stated that the Executive Committee would work with the Constitution and Bylaws committee to put this proposal together and submit to GAC.
 - Everyone was reminded to be watching for an email from Christina Lund and the Election Committee, regarding election of next years’ Senators.

Valuing People/AQIP:

- Fred Nesslage discussed serving on the "Communication and Social Interactions" subcommittee, which is part of the Valuing Employees Action Project Charter here on campus. To this point, the committee has been working on development of a “one-stop shop” web site for employee information. If staff have input on types of things they would like to see on this page, please get in touch with any member of this committee.

C-3 Committee:

- Carol Hare stated that the Salary & Fringe Committee met to discuss the current rumor mill, C3, GAC/Crisis Leave and other issues. As for C3, the process is still ongoing; We came in at 11% below market value, but other criteria factored in brings us back down another 5 points; Questions were asked by the committee for further clarification. Carol stated that the timing of all of this may almost be moot point; Data will come to everyone once completed, but action may not be taken, due to the current budget situation, potential changes and future cuts coming. Carol will continue to keep the Association informed regarding these issues.

Staff Association Committee Reports

Constitution & Bylaws:

- Michelle Diaz stated that the committee needed to meet, not that the Exempt/Non-Exempt language vote has taken place.

Welcoming Committee:

- Jackie Burns stated that they welcomed 2 new employees in March.

Election:

- Emails will be coming out soon regarding nominations and elections for the new academic year.

Grievance:

- There are no grievances at this time. Kathy Kelly will be calling the committee to meet regarding potential preparations for issues surrounding loss of employment and/or hirings.

Professional Development:

- Nick Edwards stated that there is enough funding left for just one person, and then all funds will be gone.

Special Events:

- Hawley stated that they have not yet met; Inquiries are being made with regards to the future of the PSA budget, as well as potential Foundation funds for the future. The committee has a small amount of funds remaining for use this fiscal year, ideas are being discussed for how to use the funds for staff in either May or June; May possibly survey staff regarding some ideas.

Advantage:

- Eric Kramer stated that they are trying to get the word out regarding the new process of offering year-long opportunities to apply for support. A message has been posted to the current Griffon Weekly.

President's Report – Tara Stoll

- AQIP/Professional Development committee has not met;
- BAC representatives for Staff are Tara Stoll and Kathy Kelly, Carol Hare takes the minutes of the meetings; Any ideas that staff may have regarding ways to save money and or bring in revenues --- No idea is too silly, please submit them to the Council via Tara and/or Kathy. Ideas may be one-time savings or long-term, any ideas are welcome. Staff are encouraged to speak up and give suggestions!
 - Some suggestions discussed were extra, possibly unneeded positions in middle management that could yield very large salary and fringe savings quickly; Positions being left unfilled; Some programs are already being reviewed for viability;
 - Elise stated that Faculty are fully supportive of staff; Tara stated that Staff and Faculty will need to work together in the coming months;

- It was stated that employees need to be pro-active with the easy things(i.e., turning off lights, closing doors, etc)
- Carol Hare stated that salary and benefits make up over 70% of our current budget; This is serious.
- Susan felt we needed to do something to make students understand the severity of the situation. Tara agreed and stated that students need to be encouraged to get involved.

First Vice President's Report – Barb Harris

- At present, the Staff budget is sitting at balance of \$936.97. However, upon further inquiry, we must remove the carryover of \$343.11 due to the freeze. This means that our remaining balance is at \$593.26. If Special Events should choose to go ahead with a late spring/early summer event, this is what they will have to work with.

Time ran out, so Tara called the meeting to a close.

Barb Harris moved to adjourn the meeting.

Several people seconded – including Hawley Rumpf.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Staff Association meeting will be on Wednesday, May 10th at 3:00pm.