

Staff Association Minutes

February 11th, 2026 - 3:00 pm

Private Dining Room



Senators Present In-Person: Chelsea Norton, Beth Beggs, Jessica Searcy, Trenny Wilson, Kristen Neeley, Jean Foster, Kasey Schmoe, Cassie Robbins, Amy Coats, Sandra Pennock, Cassandra Penick, John Vanderpool

Staff Present In-Person: Jennifer Morris

Staff Present on Zoom: Tara Vides, Haley Lindsey, Kendall Schank, Channelle Montoya, Teresa Cobb, Chuck Miller, Erin Keller, Monica Phillips, Kari Hayes, Kara Baum, Jill Voltmer, Susan Bracciano, Sara Freemyer and Lori Bomberger

Committee Reports

- Welcoming & Care:
 - Next meeting on February 19th at 2pm. Amanda Kabir from Housing & Residence Life has joined the committee.
 - Continuing discussion regarding applications for assistance. The Faculty senate discussed it and has offered for Jana Frye (Social Work) to help review those applications. She has connections to the community that could help those who need assistance.
- Election, Constitution & Bylaws:
 - Have recently met to work on proposed changes to senator election timelines. Should have an update at the next meeting.
- Employee Engagement:
 - Next meeting is scheduled for February 26th at 10am, Einstein Bros.
 - Planning on a staff retreat.
 - Dr. Tim Crowley is currently doing motivational speaking and we have met to discuss what we would like to have him present for us pending budget and planning approval.
 - Employee of the month proposal is in its final stages.
 - Spring event planning consists of a St. Patrick's Day event, March 17th 11am to 12:30pm. Lemonade and limeade bar at the clock tower, pending approval. We thought about having popcorn, yard games, trivia, music, prizes. The total cost estimate hasn't been proposed yet.

Institutional Committees Reports

- Compensation:
 - A conversation was had during the last meeting that employees are sitting on a pool of leave and it costs the university an abundance of money when they leave. A question was posed whether or not lowering the cap should be considered. It was mentioned that employees do not feel like they can take time off and complete their work.
 - The only time it is a problem is when an employee quits and those hours have to be paid out.
 - The group was questioned as to why employees would be sitting on time. Are they saving it for something? Do they not feel supported in their role to take time off?
 - Nothing was decided or encouraged, it was just a discussion.
 - When employees get paid out is it a dollar for dollar or a percentage?

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- HR verified that it is paid out at their regular rate of pay.
 - Employees never earn more than their cap.
- Information Technology and Infrastructure:
 - Have not met.
- Health & Safety:
 - Have not met.
- Physical Environment:
 - Have not met.

Invited Guests

- Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy, President:
 - March 6th is Employee Appreciation Day. We will be giving out meal tickets again.
 - We have a winter and spring luncheon generally. However at the awards ceremonies they are heavily attended. So this year they are working on combining the spring luncheon with the awards ceremony. We will allow offices to be closed so that everyone has the opportunity to support those recognized. Tuesday, May 5th.
 - The direct admit program has another member coming soon. To be announced as soon as it is fully executed.
 - Office of Assessment and Accreditation, Beth Beggs is hosting a valentine's event in Popplewell 120 today and tomorrow. Come vote and have some candy.
 - Megan Deshon-Runge and John Vanderpool took 7 of our students down to Great Northwest Days. They got to assist with the event, meet legislatures and participate in the day's events. There were 19 counties represented at the event.
- Dr. Jay Johnson, Provost:
 - Not in attendance.
- Daniel Holt, VP of Finance:
 - USI, our new Benefit Broker and us have been meeting to discuss how we can work together for well programs for employees. We will have an 18 month window before we will move to a program that requires employees to make sure they are getting their wellness exams, blood draw, etc.
 - BlueCross has free programs (tools) that employees could take advantage of now.
 - The Compensation Committee has put together some teasers for the next board meeting. The plan is to have the full plan submitted to the board in April to be approved in the May BOG meeting.
 - We have been discussing realistic aspirations.
 - A draft of the plan will be worked on this week.
 - Conversations are still continuing regarding Elucian Banner. Should have a recommendation for the board after we finish all the meetings with vendors.
 - FY 27' budget is being planned out now. It should be submitted to the board late April.
 - The new summer pay schedule is out now. We evaluated surrounding areas to see what others are doing.

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- Question posed regarding whether the new summer pay will affect the summer schedule?
 - Schedule draft is being completed now and then if faculty is not interested in teaching we will then look for adjuncts. There will be a whole process. Strategically we will plan to offer courses that do not double our instructional costs. If we are offering it over the summer we need to make sure the sections during Fall and Spring are at capacity. The courses we are offering in the Summer should be thoughtful. Courses that require students to take to move forward in their degree plan. Less independent studies and more thoughtful degree offering.
 - There should be open adjunct pools in heavily trafficked areas.
- Monty Smith, Faculty Liaison
 - Not in attendance.

Previous Meeting Minutes Approval

- Jean Foster motioned to approve. Trinny Wilson seconded. All I's.

President's Report - Chelsea Norton

- Institutional Committees are asking for nominations. It will be a 2 year term. They are emergency committees so they do not always meet unless there is something happening that requires their submission of information.
 - The Staff Association gets two seats for each committee, but other areas on campus also get seats. You could be serving representing another area.
 - You nominate yourself and we will submit those nominees for each committee chair to pick their members.
- Working with the foundation we received \$7,000.00 that we spent on staff last year. This year they are asking for a more formal request of funds. We are working with Employee Engagement to get details and budget proposals for possible events that the foundation would be interested in funding. Our challenge is that we are offering up plans for events that we may not be on the committee to make sure goes to plan. The executive board only serves 2 year terms so it makes it hard to always have 2 years of events planned out when committee members change every year as well. The question has been posed: can we make an amendment to a proposed plan after approval. No answer has been given as of today.

Vice President's Report - Beth Beggs

- We started the month out with \$2,200.00. Cheer cart costs were \$1,479.83. Ending the month with \$1,724.17. We have plans to request reimbursement from the foundation for the cheer cart.

Unfinished Business

- None

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New Business

- None

Open Discussion/Announcements

- Renewal of the transit agreement between the university and the city of St. Joseph. Your Griffon ID allows you to ride for free by presenting to the driver.
 - Question posed whether or not this is only for campus routes or St. Joseph in general. St. Joseph stops. If you need them to drop you off at a spot not a normal route it is \$.25.

Mark your calendars:

- Next Staff Association meeting: March 11th, 2026 at 3pm in the PDR for Senators. All staff on Zoom.

Motion to End: Cassandra Penick motions, John Vanderpool seconds.