

Staff Council Minutes  
November 5, 2013

Attendees: Brenda Soto, Bethany Grubbs, Arielle Mari, Diane Westerfield, Andrew Watson, Nancy Fox, Susan Brickell, Kathy Gonzalez, Denise Sheridan, Lori Peck, Cindy Endicott, Stormy Burns, Aimee Stephenson, Naomi Trujillo. Absent: Joseph Sharman  
Other - Marj Webster, Mark Saviano, Randy Nehls, Jill Tiefenthaler, Barbara Wilson

**Ongoing Business**

1. Approve last meeting's minutes  
Brenda motion to approve, seconded, no opposition
  
2. Vote on proposed 2013-14 budget  
\$3,500 for Welcome Back Fall Event  
\$1,100 for Event Support, \$1,000 for Professional Development  
\$500 for Staff Council Shirts  
\$400 for Gifts and Recognitions  
\$500 for the Contingency Fund, and the End of Year Event was removed from the budget)  
Susan motion to approve, seconded, no opposition.
  
3. Strategic Planning and Staff Council involvement
  - a. Over 100 people are participating in 11 teams  
Initial meetings taking place to define their charge.
  - b. Staff Council can help with communication, keep representative areas up to date.  
Our job to keep the momentum going and pass along info when appropriate.
  
4. Staff Council communication and feedback (anonymous submission form, Staff Council email, emails to distribution groups, messages to the Staff group, attendance at division meetings, etc.)
  - a. Nothing submitted after the "In the Loop" questions
  - b. Any feedback about Friday's (11/1/2013) professional development announcement?  
People are pleased, but also concerned that the offerings are way too broad. People are looking for more specific training that applies to their position. Maybe something that departments need to work on directly with HR.  
  
Regarding supervisory training. What about accountability. Are supervisors taking advantage of these opportunities? Not mandatory, but monitored. Lisa Brommer commented that the training is not mandatory, but HR is tracking attendance.  
  
Currently, the training offered is heavy on opportunities for supervisors, so the rest of us will need to wait.
  - c. Any feedback about Monday's (10/28/2013) Tiger Service Awards announcement?  
No feedback

5. Follow-up on Co-Chair meetings with HR and the President
  - a. Compensation Committee recommendations for next year's salary pool and evaluations
    - Recommendation of flat dollar COGS to all
    - Change categories currently listed on performance evaluation
    - Increase 10% of salary for matching
    - Within band - tiers
  
6. Report on Staff Council lunches, decide who hosts the next (Nancy)
  - Did not happen this past block. Nancy, Cindy, Arielle, Diane to do it this block.
  - Make sure we get it in Digest. Meet in one of rooms downstairs.
  - Nancy will go over in advance to pick up boxes. Brenda mentioned that we can also borrow boxes from Conferences.
  
7. Subcommittees (those without new reports are listed here)
  - a. Listserv for Liberal Arts Staff Councils (Joseph, Nancy)
    - No report
  - b. Staff Training/Professional Development (Aimee, Bethany, Diane, Lori; also Lisa Brommer)
    - No updates
  - c. Assistance Fund/Vacation Sharing (Bethany, Lori; also Barbara Wilson)
    - No updates
  - d. Staff Recognition (Bethany, Cindy, Denise, Nancy; also Lisa Brommer)
    - i. New Tiger Service Awards Program
      - Lisa reported that staff people seem satisfied with the recognition happening.
      - Video will happen at In the Loop, over 30 people being recognized at the next meeting. Also, getting to know video - Int'l Program

## Special Reports

1. President's report, Jill Tiefenthaler
  - a. Continuing her travels to numerous cities for the Strategic Plan rollout. Very well received. Faculty have been traveling with Jill. Going well. Three cities left.
  - b. Board of Trustee meetings this Thursday – Saturday. Governance committee looking at new Trustees. Four trustees becoming life trustees: Sue Woolsey, Doug Norberg, Mike Lampton and Bill Hybl. Budget Committee will be looking at recommendations from campus budget committee
    - BOT strategic teams (4) which will be working with the on-campus committees.
    - Thank you event taking place Nov. 7, to those donors who contributed to the Internship campaign.
  - c. Admission numbers up over 50% from last year at this time.
  - d. Fundraising side - \$'s all great. Won the DU challenge. Never hit 1500 donors by Nov. 1 before so very good to see.
    - Call Center is 'rocking'. Students are calling with great results
  - e. Innovation Institute Workshop hosted by Jill. Went very well.
  - f. Policy and Compliance page - password protected – Jill was worried that we weren't

compliant in all areas. Within the month should have HEOA compliance. After the new year, JMT plans to remove the password protections.

## 2. Human Resources report, Barbara Wilson

- a. Rolled out Professional Development schedule for entire year. Wide range of opportunities for training. Quite a few sessions scheduled for evaluation process. Refresher for SMART goals. Keeping sessions combined, rather than supervisor-supervisee in separate training.
- b. Tool - changed very little, but some improvements on the form.  
Calibration - need to ensure supervisors meet with cabinet during the process.
- c. Benefits statements going out.
- d. Rewards and Recognition - "Tiger Service" Awards. Now employees are recognized the month of their service anniversary.
- e. Two sessions for HR policies rollout and the Staff Handbook. 65 staff attended. Will offer a couple more sessions.
- f. Communications to go out for next phase of wellness program. "Health Assessment"
- g. Posting Benefits Manager position. Vicky Alexander resigned.
- h. Regarding Performance Evaluations - Too many "exceptional". Academic division – 43% were recognized as 'Exceptional'  
Nothing changing with the categories for this year.  
Jill commented - Keep what we have for two years before we change it again.

## 3. Campus Committee reports (Budget Committee, etc.)

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### 1. Events Planning Committee

##### a. Fall Festival discussion

Nov. 22, Fall Tailgate party. Gates Common Room 4:00-6:00p.m.

Advertising through flyers and the Digest. Kathy will also do a Save the Date

Halloween party - about 50 people. Went well. Kudos to Kathy for successful party

#### 2. Staff Amenities Brochure/Website (Cindy, Nancy, Andrew)

##### a. Vendor discounts, Perks Program, advertising new offerings

### **New Business**

#### 1. Suggested removal of 20% target/cap on "Exceptional" rating

Mark Saviano, Technical/Statistical Director with the Psychology Department, attended the meeting and submitted the attached addendum to address during the meeting. (Full addendum at end of document.)

Instead of a set percentage being awarded each year to "Exceptional" employees (e.g., the 2.5% raise of 2012-13), the "Exceptional" merit pool could have a set dollar amount budgeted (perhaps equal to the cost of a 2.5% raise for 20% of all staff), and everyone with an "Exceptional" ranking would get an equal percentage of that pool, even if more than 20% of

staff rate as “Exceptional.”

Discussion about Mark's submission.

Realizes the Flatness of Academic Departments

Our strong category is above cost of living rate.

Exceptional not a rating that you would expect to receive every year.

Can also be recommended for a bonus. Separate from the rest of the process.

Staff much better off if added to base, rather than as a bonus.

2. Feedback regarding “In the Loop,” suggestions for the next meeting

Loved the videos. Kudos to Arielle.

- a. Agenda items for November 22?  
Professional Development items mentioned  
Mention the Fall Tailgate party
- b. Which department should we feature?
  - i. International Programs is in the works.
  - ii. The Library has volunteered
  - iii. Other suggestions - Arts & Crafts and Central Services.
- c. Taking minutes at future In the Loop meetings

3. Policy and compliance efforts - Bethany

- a. Staff Council can help with getting the word out, informing our constituent areas (we should know the policies that govern our division)
- b. Jermyn is working on a response to Staff Council’s February 2012 policy document  
Will update us on results of meeting.

4. Feedback regarding Staff Council’s new divisional structure

- a. Communication in representative areas with multiple departments
- b. Any feedback from staff areas we represent?  
What if our lists are incorrect? Joseph compiles from Banner. Inquiries can be made to Joseph, Barbara and Lisa.

5. Future agenda items

6. Other business?

Marj Webster and Randy Nehls asked Staff Council to set up a separate meeting to discuss the budget for next year. Would like to get SC feedback. Would like to meet within next two weeks prior to their next meeting.

7. Action Points, Bethany

Adjournment - 1:05p.m.

To: Lisa Brommer – Human Resources  
From: Mark Saviano – Psychology Department  
CC: Joseph Sharman, Bethany Grubbs, Nancy Fox – Staff Council Co-Chairs  
Date: November 4, 2013  
Re: Merit Performance Evaluations – Year Two Adjustments

Hi Lisa,

I had a thought about the logistics of the performance evaluations and wanted to share that thought from the perspective of a psychologist and statistician. I submit this to you and to Staff Council for consideration.

#### GOALS

Award performance raises based on merit.  
Maintain fiscal responsibility and observe fiscal constraints.  
Build positive regard toward the system.

#### PLANNED SYSTEM

“Cabinet level approval before ratings are assigned and shared with the employee.”  
I’m not a party to the conversations regarding implementation of this system, so I realize I’m making assumptions that could turn out to be false. Honestly making the best inferences I can I imagine the following:

Supervisors make evaluation drafts and submit these to the Cabinet. If more than 20% of Staff receives the Exceptional rating, cabinet members communicate with supervisors that the evaluations may be too liberal and ask them to please revise their drafts. Revisions occur until the feasible 20% level is achieved and these evaluations become official and are communicated with employees.

#### **Concerns with this System (or one like it)**

- A. Staff may have the perception that if more than 20% truly perform exceptionally, then some will go unrecognized simply for budgetary reasons. That may not seem fair and may diminish the incentive a merit system is supposed to inculcate. (Undermines Goals 1 and 3 in favor of 2)
- B. Supervisors thoughtful evaluations are undermined – they do not have the autonomy to assign what they think best. Moreover they are asked to present and support an evaluation they may not feel is accurate. This makes for an unpleasant process for supervisors and has potential to negatively impact the supervisor-employee relationship and the supervisor-cabinet relationship. (Undermines Goal 3 in favor of Goal 2)

#### ALTERNATE POSSIBLE SYSTEM

Without constraints from above, supervisors make the evaluations they feel are appropriate having the direct hands-on experience with their supervisees. This results in whatever percentage of Exceptional

ratings occur naturally. Instead of a set percentage being awarded to these employees (i.e., the additional 2.5% above the standard 2.5% this past year = 5.0% total), the percentage is set dynamically to be whatever level would utilize 100% of the merit pool.

For example, if 20% received the Exceptional rating the additional raise may be the expected 2.5% like this past year.

But if 33% received Exceptional, the raise may be reduced to 1.5% when spread across that group.

If only 10% were rated Exceptional then the raise may amount to an additional 5% (7.5% total). The pool is spread across fewer than expected individuals.

### **Advantages of this System**

- C. Everyone evaluated as “Exceptional” receives recognition on their evaluation and a merit raise, though the amount is variable.
- D. Supervisors are empowered rather than constrained. They are authorized to use their best judgment and assign what in consultation with their supervisees seems the most appropriate rating. This relieves pressure on both the supervisor-supervisee and supervisor-cabinet relationships.
- E. Budgetary constraints are built in. The merit pool is determined normally – unchanged. Only the way distribution from the pool occurs is modified. There is no chance of exceeding budget, regardless of ratings awarded.
- F. The system is naturally self-correcting for performance “grade inflation.” If supervisors all decide to favor their staff and give the highest rating – resulting in, for example, 85% “Exceptionals” – the result will simply be that the merit bonus is negligible. This will motivate staff, and hopefully supervisors, to pursue the most valid evaluations possible, rather than undermine the system, assuming there really is a broad communal desire for merit-based raises.

### **SUMMARY**

Psychologically and statistically this suggestion seems to me to flow more naturally without creating conflict. It’s hard to imagine how forcing a system unnaturally to a somewhat arbitrarily chosen number (performance-wise if not budget-wise) of 20% can seem valid and avoid conflict. I submit this idea to HR and Staff Council for your consideration beyond my limited perspective.