

Staff Council Meeting –February 24, 2009

Attending: Millie Brence-Austin, Lee Dougherty, Matt Reuer, Stephanie Daigle, Nancy Luther, McKinley Sielaff, Dave Reed, Penny Rains, Shaleen Prehm

Bruce Coriell – Morale on campus

- Pay attention to staff as people first approach through this – our biggest asset are our people
- Cascading set of sacrifices that people would be willing to make rather than loose their jobs i.e. furlough and time reduction rather than salary reductions, salary reductions rather than lay offs. Doesn't think that is where we are headed
- One rumor is we've gotten too big, if that is true, who is responsible for that if it is true – no one hired themselves
- Cuts should be made at all levels of the system, doesn't make sense to cut lower paid positions
- Rising levels of anxiety, fear and anger
- Voluntary separation has triggered a lot of things for people – hoping to hear 'don't worry' for a number
- Sense of betrayal
- His sense is that faculty don't feel the same kind of anxiety of job loss as staff does, makes it easier to not "get it", doesn't mean that faculty are not sensitive
- Make changes to compensation in a graduated fashion to share the burden across the campus
- Personal care – how to help people that may be affected by lay offs – its not just work but a community!
- In stress we do not go to our best selves hard for people to see how stress affects us across the board
- So many variables affect people interactions and decisions
- Urges us to have an agenda of how we move through this – put out recommendations of what would be the right things to do
- Traditional thinking got us into this mess and traditional solutions won't get us out of this, we need to be more creative

What have we collectively heard? How is staff council approaching this?

- As staff council we have not formulated an approach yet, we are waiting to hear from the Ad Hoc committee
- We would be supportive of what Bruce mentioned
- If a considerable number is laid off, there will be a considerable work load for those remaining. The Franklin and Marshall study showed large growth in a number of departments
- Communication across campus needs to be improved
- Its easy to point fingers at other departments for reduction, perhaps we as a community need to understand functions across campus the need to see a bigger picture
- Staff council needs to be a better conduit of communication
- What is our role as advocate for staff? People seem to be getting more guarded and have a sense of not being safe and do not feel they can speak up. The avenues to do so are some what limited. Staff council should be one of those places for people to speak up.
- What would Staff Council recommend the college do should there be staff reductions
- There seems to be a lot of secrecy in how departments are meeting the challenges. No transparency

- Decisions are being made at the institutional level as well as departments doing things at their own level
- Lots of people doing a lot of things at different times, some level of continuity is really important
- We need real guidance about what is going to happen with layoffs
- Some staff members are getting different information in their departments versus what has been said in others
- Consistent message would help everyone - we need to ask the President and Senior Staff for consistent messages
- Different divisions have different styles

What ideas can Staff Council generate that should be on the table and considered friendly to staff?

- Create a list of staff friendly budget reductions
- Who to network with to get on board with these ideas
- What can be temporary and what can be permanent

Staff friendly ideas – need to be permanent reductions, not temporary band-aids

- Furloughs
 - Reduced hours
 - Pay-cuts
 - Club memberships reductions
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- Board of Trustees committed to an \$8m budget reduction and asked for \$4m more to be identified as a next step if the economy gets worse or stays the same
 - Others have heard we are to reduce by a solid \$12m
 - The Board did not formally adopt the budget in February but will do so in May
 - Divisional restructuring may be coming down the line based on what was said at the board meeting
 - Email ideas and thoughts to McKinley for suggestions at Thursdays Open budget session
 - Staff council needs to be involved before decisions are made, with our recommendations, give us the opportunity to help with that process
 - A Public letter will be sent to Senior Staff, Ad Hoc Committee, President and be published on the Staff Council website
 - We need to forward our recommendation about what we think would be a good severance package

What kind of notice should those people get?

- Length of notice – minimum of one month
- A minimum of ¾ of the entire voluntary package offered
- Years of service needs to be recognized
- Can people get their jobs back after they are let go?

Staff Recognition

- Some on campus expressed concern as to how communication was handled and that perhaps it was not classy
- McKinley will forward her draft letter to Senior Staff to all of Staff Council for review and edits

Elections

- 9 people nominated for 6 openings
- We will leave it open through spring break
- Finalize elections in Block 7
- Everyone on staff council should think of one person they could nominate

Hot Topics

- People seemed to like the discussion on voluntarism

Committee Liaison

- Joan has stepped down as committee liaison
- Need to vote to officially to put Terri Akse in the position – unanimous vote

Misc

- Health insurance went to the FEC – Shaleen will forward that to staff council
- Lee proposed that Staff Council along with volunteers from the campus community donate time to help the grounds crew beautify the campus before commencement and homecoming. Staff Council feels this would be a great way for the community to be involved in giving back to the campus and for those that work hard to keep the campus looking so nice and clean. The vote was unanimous