

Staff Council Minutes February 25, 2014

Attendees: Joseph Sharman, Brenda Soto, Bethany Grubbs, Arielle Mari, Diane Westerfield, Andrew Watson, Nancy Fox, Susan Brickell, Lori Cowan, Cindy Endicott, Stormy Burns, Denise Sheridan, Kathy Gonzalez, Aimee Stephenson
Other - Jermyn Davis, Aaron Cohick, Stephanie Wurtz

Ongoing Business

1. **Approve last meeting's minutes**
Motion to approve (Joseph), seconded (Diane). Motion passed

2. **Staff Luncheon Sessions, Aaron Cohick, 10 minutes**
Workplace excellence. Like the faculty lunch program. Create a venue that allows staff to share/present their specialty, whether it's related to their job or not. For next academic year. Idea is to start big – possibly using First Monday as a venue.

A catered lunch would help to draw people in but then it's an issue of fund. President has discretionary funds she may be willing to use to support this.

3. **Strategic Planning and Staff Council involvement**
Workplace Executive Committee looking at the results of the climate survey.
2013-14 – focus on communication, supervisory competencies, and performance management. Idea is to focus on 2-3 main ideas and hit them hard, so staff can see the results.

2014-15 – focus on communication, respect and appreciation, and professional development.

For the future – resources, support and workload. Senior leadership and collaboration round out the list.

2015-16 – workplace excellence. Employee opportunities to advance. Important to keep that on the table, but need to get everyone up to market before this can go further.

Question came up about budget shortfalls. Financial manager of a department has to initiate the process. Enid receives the request. Longer conversation about this is needed.

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. Chad Schonewill's list of ideas;
 - i. Jill responded positively to Chad's email and told him she would bring these things up to the Workplace Excellence strategic action team.
 - ii. Chad's email message attached at end of document.

- b. Anonymous feedback about parking enforcement in the Armstrong lot;
 - i. Nancy will talk to Nick about the concerns regarding permit parking and the frustrations people are having with people parking in the lots without permits.
 - ii. We can post Nick's response on the Staff Council website.
 - c. Other feedback?
 - i. No other feedback
- 5. Follow-up on Co-Chair meetings with HR and the President
 - a. Look into Staff Council models at other schools – how can Staff Council be stronger?
 - i. Jill has requested that Staff Council take a look at other school's Staff Councils to get their best practices.
 - ii. Jill wants Staff Council to have legitimacy and be empowered. She wants to be confident that we are the voices of staff on campus.
 - iii. Joseph will set up a spreadsheet, and we can sign up to contact a school.
 - b. Diversity Action Team (Nancy)
 - i. Should have proposals turned in this Friday. Will meet after to fine-tune the proposals.
- 6. Report on Staff Council lunches, decide who hosts the next
 - a. Block 5 lunch did not happen
 - b. Denise, Arielle and Stormy to take Block 6.
 - i. Aimee will get the lunch boxes to Arielle
 - c. Kathy and Susan will take Block 7.
- 7. Retreat follow-up, collaboration committee idea, Bethany Grubbs, 5 minutes
Handout from Bethany summarizing ideas coming out of the retreat. Only grouping that didn't seem to fall under an existing subcommittee was "Outreach, Collaboration, Networking". Discussion and agreement not to start another subcommittee.
- 8. Subcommittees (those without new reports are listed here) No report
 - a. Listserv for Liberal Arts Staff Councils (Joseph, Nancy)

Special Reports

- 1. President's report, 10 minutes (Jermyn reporting)
Workplace excellence is the big focus.

Jill would like to gather members of the FEC, Staff Council and president's staff to think about the committees we have and who the best people are to have on these committees.

General discussion about the effectiveness of committees. Would like to see a real 'buy-in' for those people serving on the committees. Would they be more effective if they were given a charge?

Stephanie Wurtz will be putting together a list of all the committees, to include general information about the committee and the current members.

2. Human Resources report, 10 minutes
No report
3. Campus Committee reports (Budget Committee, etc.), 5 minutes
No report

Subcommittee Reports, including action items to address, 10 minutes

1. Assistance Fund/Vacation Sharing (no report)
2. Events Planning Committee (Bethany, Kathy)
Birthday Bash and New Employee Meet and Greet taking place in March
3. Staff Amenities Brochure/Website (Cindy, Nancy, Andrew)
 - a. Vendor discounts, Perks Program, and advertising new offerings
Motion to create a form that vendors will fill out so we can include their discounts on the website. Seconded. Motion passed. Andrew and Cindy will work on this and send it out for Staff Council to review.

Cindy offered to verify the submissions. Will check with vendors every 6 months to confirm the information. Will ask vendors to resubmit a form each year.

- b. New Amenities site
The site looks great – thank you Andrew!
4. Staff Recognition
Anyone with information to share about a colleague's accomplishments, etc. can submit the information to Leslie Weddell, and she will include in Around the Block newsletter.
5. Staff Training/Professional Development (Diane)
 - a. Upcoming events (email/scheduling sessions, birdwatching lunch & learn, FMLA)
 - i. A lot of learning opportunities out there for staff to attend. Staff Council needs to promote within our areas. Try to attend and bring a friend!

New Business

1. Professional development opportunities, 10 minutes
 - a. While the Professional Development Center is getting started, how do we offer on-campus, job-specific opportunities for staff?
 - i. Joseph to put together a survey to see what people are interested in. Could possibly pay a staff person to lead a class if the interest is there.
 - b. Are sufficient funds available in all departments for professional development?

2. Advancement fundraising campaign, Susan, 10 minutes
 - a. Feedback regarding asking staff to donate
 - i. General consensus that it's standard practice to ask staff to donate to a college's campaign.
 - ii. Would be appealing if staff as a group could put money toward a specific purpose – such as financial aid. Might create more willingness if people knew exactly where the money would be going.
 - iii. Don't mail the solicitation home. Keep it on campus – makes it feel more work-related.
3. Feedback from Staff Council's new divisional structure, 5 minutes
 - a. Communication in representative areas with multiple departments
 - b. Any feedback from staff areas we represent?
4. Future agenda items
5. Other business?
6. Action Points, Bethany
 - Nancy will email Nick about the parking permit issue.
 - Joseph will create a spreadsheet so we can sign up to contact a school.
 - Aimee to send lunch boxes to Arielle
 - Block 6 Lunch – Arielle, Denise and Stormy
 - Block 7 Lunch – Kathy and Susan
 - Andrew and Cindy will create the vendor form
 - Joseph will create the survey to send out to staff
 - Everyone – email Aaron Cohick with suggestions for the staff education sessions.

Meeting adjourned: 1:00p.m.

From: Chad Schonewill <cschonewill@ColoradoCollege.edu>

Date: Thursday, February 13, 2014 10:42 AM

To: Jill Tiefenthaler <jmt@coloradocollege.edu>, Staff Council <staffcouncil@ColoradoCollege.edu>

Cc: "Max Henry (maxhbl@gmail.com)" <maxhbl@gmail.com>, Brian Young <BAY@ColoradoCollege.edu>

Subject: Great place to work - time and focus

President Jill and Staff Council,

I notice in my own work and also hear from many others that one of our big challenges at CC is time. We have resources, we have terrific people, and we have a large number of good ideas, but we sometimes lack the time and/or focus to pay attention to those ideas and make them into reality. This is particularly poignant for issues that no particular office or person owns. As Susan Ashley said in last year's women in leadership presentation, "we have to figure out how to focus on what's important instead of what's urgent."

Pouring our time and energy into those day-to-day tasks *is* certainly important, but I'd love to find ways for us to have more time and focus to work on innovative solutions and moving forward as well. For your consideration in the great places to work task force and the staff council retreat, I'd like offer a few recommended solutions that I think would contribute to making CC an even greater place to work:

(Note: as an alum, when thinking about this problem, my mind has always drifted to the block plan itself as a model which champions the idea of intense focus in a short period of time... there's got to be something about our distinctive system we can use for the work environment too).

Focus days

What if, just like sick and vacation days, CC employees also got official focus days? A focus day would be a hybrid of work and vacation – you'd be at work, but the entire day would be spent focusing on a long term project or innovation. No email, no phone, no day-to-day tasks to distract you... to the rest of the workforce at the college, it'd be like you were on vacation. 8 hours of uninterrupted time to focus on something directly related to your job role.

This could also work well for teams and task forces – we've experimented a little with the idea in ITS, and have seen some impressive success by getting all the stakeholders in a room and working through a problem start to finish. We were able to accomplish some big things in only 1 day that we'd been trying to do via email and shorter meetings for months or even years beforehand, just because we had all the right people focusing on it simultaneously.

Innovation days

What if CC had an official innovation day once a semester (block break 2 and block break 7, perhaps)? On this day, we'd *all* turn our attention to new ideas as an entire community. There could be programming designed specifically to support creativity and fun, as well as cohorts made specifically to mix up the silos and get a cross section of people working together toward a common goal of innovation. Like Fall Conference amplified. Ideas could be collected, and then a group could choose some to implement. There could even be prizes / incentives. It would be a way to make innovation a structured part of our work culture, and for us to know we won't be getting behind on other work since everyone is doing it that same day.

Community voted project

What if we gathered ideas from the innovation day (or from other sources) and created a list of 6-8 that leadership thinks are reasonable and worthwhile, then put it to the community to vote. This could also work for sub communities, for example a student voted project, a staff voted project, and alumni voted project, etc. The winning project would be assigned an ad hoc team which would get some kind of release from regular duties to come together and make it happen. These should be cross-functional projects for the benefit of all that wouldn't necessarily happen any other way. For example, adding numerous electrical outlets in buildings to help students with an increasing number of electronic devices (battery charging stations, extra adapters at service desks, etc.) or starting a college-wide book club for professional development topics.

Staff mini sabbaticals

What if a staff member has a really great idea for something and the will to make it happen, but it's totally outside the scope of his or her job or else it just ends up at that part of the priority list that he or she can never get to. It could be handed off to others, but what if that staff person could apply for a mini sabbatical in order to take some time off from the regular job to do this project. Maybe a week? I think in this case it would be a process almost like applying for a grant, except that instead of money, the approving body would be giving time (though in some cases maybe money too...). I know it's very similar to the focus day idea, but in this case it's longer and would need external approval of some kind.

Field trips

Max Henry, a leadership consultant we've been working with in ITS, recently sponsored a field trip across the street to the ANA (money museum). He took care of the logistics of scheduling and paying for entry, we just had to show up and walk through and then we owed him 2 ideas. I found the exercise really neat, and think it could be a great practice for the college. Imagine a cross section of faculty, staff, and students going on small sponsored field trips to local places just to be exposed to something different and see what informal ideas come from it. Other higher ed institutions certainly, but also other organizations (high schools, elementary schools, the zoo, serenity springs big cats wildlife reserve – tigers!, etc.)

~ Chad Schonewill

ITS:Service

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