

## **Staff Council Meeting Minutes - September 7, 2006**

Members in attendance: Courtney Arnstein, Cathe Bailie, Cindy Christensen, Lee Doughty, Nancy Heinecke, Nancy Luther, Kristi Salkil, Chad Schonewill, Daryll Stevens, Joan Taylor, Rita Zook

### **Children's Center Committee**

Staff Council was recently asked to solicit volunteers for a non-exempt, voting committee member. After doing so, and recommending Dorothy Phillips, Staff Council was informed that the opening was instead for an exempt staff person, who would be a voting member of the committee (currently no one in this category is on the committee). The membership list held by the committee itself differs from that of the President's office. Committee representatives requested that this new committee member be the parent of a child enrolled in the Children's Center; however this is not stipulated in the current committee structure.

There is another issue in that there is currently an extra non-exempt person on the committee because of Dorothy Phillips' appointment. It was recommended that the Children's Center Committee ask the Faculty Executive Committee for approval of this temporary anomaly, and that perhaps they should ask for a change in structure to accommodate their preference for a parent member.

Kristi moved we open up to campus for volunteers with one week limit and vote by email, keeping in mind their preference for a parent, but not specifying that in our announcement. Motion was seconded by Courtney, and passed unanimously.

### **Meet the Staff Council Party**

The Meet Staff Council party will take place on September 20 from 4 to 6 p.m. in Gates Common Room. Invitations were distributed campus wide earlier this week.

A sign-up sheet was circulated for volunteers to staff the welcome table. It was agreed that Staff Council members will wear their maroon Staff Council shirts so that attendees can easily locate us to obtain our signatures on their door prize forms (Nancy L. and Lee will not be able to attend). Cindy will MC the event. Due to tax issues, all door prize gift cards are in the amount of \$25. It was agreed that those whose names are drawn must be present to receive a prize, and that winners may select a gift card, rather than this being predetermined. Kristi will provide the schedule from last year's event to Cindy and Courtney.

### **Feedback for President Celeste on Climate**

Kristi explained that she and Chad met with President Celeste to ask for his support of the Staff Council party. He unexpectedly asked for feedback on climate issues. The conversation was mostly non-specific; items that were touched on were: working with Staff Council, relationship Staff Council would like to have with president, and rumors circulating about recent employee terminations. As

mentioned in an email sent to Staff Council members from Kristi on September 1, President Celeste asked for feedback on issues we thought should be brought to the attention of Senior Staff in a meeting that is scheduled for the third week of this block.

Issues discussed included:

#### Finances

- \$2 million extra could be budgeted for Cornerstone, but not benefits that are standard industry benefits.
- If bond was being redressed for Cornerstone, why not include parking?
- Expenditure on plinths

#### Morale

- Feeling that employees are low on list of priorities to the college; actions do not match words in core values of valuing every person.
- Inclusion not permeating down for things like fall conference.
- Vision 2010 – faculty, alumni always mentioned, but never staff.
- Staff members feel they are being dictated to rather than included as part of the process.
- Current climate of fear – unexplained employee terminations, aura of secrecy (transparency is important).
- Rumors that Staff Council membership is perceived by some senior staff as a negative; “we/they” mentality.

It was agreed that it's important to frame our concerns in a way that will not cause anyone to become defensive, but that is specific enough to be clear.

#### **Committees**

Chad stated that on campus there are currently three separate lists of committee memberships. He suggested that to obviate problems such as the Children's Center committee issue discussed earlier we should push for one cohesive list of committee members.

Cindy and Joan will organize the luncheon for committee volunteers, with a target date in October. It was agreed that this event should include information about the duties of committee members and their responsibilities to Staff Council. Committee members will be asked to introduce themselves and announce which committee they represent.

Other discussion points were as follows:

- Multiple invitations should be issued to committee members to report back to staff council; would be optimal to see minutes from each committee, or at least an informal summary ("notes").
- Staff Council should be a hub for committees; it would be good to let committees know what other committees are doing and when they are meeting.

- We should be careful about coming on too strong; even though we are supposed to oversee committees, this hasn't been enforced so it will be viewed as a new thing.
- Some committees do want a link with us, so we should be proactive and invite them, but shouldn't come on too strong.
- Expectations should be set forth now for a report at end of year.
- Staff Council members should individually take committee members to lunch to get feedback – this should probably be done about halfway through the year to remind them of their obligations.
- Committee chairs have to write up an annual report; Rita volunteered that she could probably obtain last year's reports for Staff Council.

### **Climate Survey**

Staff Council will conduct a climate survey this year (the plan is to do this fairly early in the year). Chad and Kristi will meet with Barbara, and will involve Institutional Research to utilize their expertise.

### **Annual Report**

The 2005-06 annual report is now finalized. Chad and Kristi plan to ask for 5 minutes at the Senior Staff meeting, give verbal summary and distribute written copies of the report.

### **Staff Council Manual**

Joan is working on updating this; on hold momentarily due to pressing job commitments.

### **Mentor Program**

Lee hoped to meet with Barbara Wilson to finalize the program but, due to the staffing shortage in Human Resources, she doesn't have time to work on it at present. It was agreed there are more pressing issues for now, and it's more important to do it right than to do it quickly. It was suggested that Lee should schedule an appointment for a future meeting with Barbara, and he plans to ask her if there's another person in Human Resources with whom he could work. The major tasks remaining before implementation are advertising for and then selecting mentor volunteers, and promoting the program to new employees.

### **Shirts/Posters**

It was agreed that, to promote awareness of Staff Council, members will wear Staff Council shirts on Fridays of each block break. Kristi will send out a reminder. Wearing shirts on meeting days is encouraged, but optional.

The mailroom will deliver posters to departments, plus Staff Council members should pick up additional posters from Rita to post in their buildings.

### **Parking Committee**

Mike Edmonds has selected a parking task force. Kristi would like to request that staff council be represented on the task force. Nancy H. and Rita are both willing to serve. It was unanimously agreed that Kristi should follow up with Mike Edmonds.

### **Web Time Entry (WTE)**

Chad summarized current status ("timesheet" employees are now doing WTE; all other non-exempt staff will start July 1, 2007). Other issues:

- Finalizing policies (this month)
- Communication about training staff on how this will impact their paychecks: gross pay & net pay calculators, classes to teach staff how to use them.
- Lag time: Due to the restructuring of pay periods, the July 15 paychecks will be lacking 5 days of pay. Tom Nycum initially said that this amount (total cost is in 6 figures) would be covered by the college; recently we were told that it will not be covered. Barbara Wilson has asked that Tom reconsider this position. Other options being proposed are employee loans and vacation cash-in.

It was suggested that if the college does not reconsider its position, we should ask that sick leave cash-in be another option.

### **Upcoming Staff Council Meetings and Minutes**

It was briefly discussed that Thursday is not a good meeting day for several Staff Council members, but most of the membership had left the meeting at this point. Kristi will email everyone to discuss new meeting day options.

The minutes at the next meeting will be taken by Lee Doughty.

--Minutes submitted by Cathe Bailie