Murray State University Staff Congress  
Draft Minutes for March 14, 2012  
304 North Applied Science Building  

**PRESENT:** Teri Benton, Shanna Burgess, Tami Dandeneau, Laura Lohr-Dziekonski, Liz Fain, Orville Herndon, Wade Herndon, Dana Howard, Margie Miller, Jerry O'Bryan, Kerry Pinkston, Chuck Plummer, Debbie Plummer, Sheri Riddle, Tressa Ross, Billy R. Russell, Tim Williams, Lisa Willis, Gina Winchester, and John Young. Guests: Tom Hoffacker, Human Resources Director; Dr. Josh Jacobs, Chief of Staff; Olivia Medovich, *MSU News*; Dr. Jay Morgan, Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Research; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice-President for Student Affairs; John Roark, Director of Sponsored Programs; and Phil Schooley, Staff Regent.  

**CALL TO ORDER:** Staff Congress President Gina Winchester called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.  

**REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS:**  
**Dr. Jay Morgan, Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Research:** Dr. Morgan provided an update on the university’s preparations for re-accreditation and answered questions. He thanked Tom Hoffacker, Gina Winchester, and Orville Herndon for attending the Handbook Revision Committee meeting. Handbook revisions need to be presented to the President’s office by the first of May. Staff may contact him with questions. Dr. Morgan introduced John Roark, the new Director Sponsored Programs.  

**John Roark, Director of Sponsored Programs:** Mr. Roark reported on the first grant writing workshop his department hosted since his arrival to the university in December. He noted that he can provide the most beneficial grant-writing assistance when persons contact him at the beginning of rather than at the end of the process.  

Gina Winchester welcomed Mr. Roark to the university.  

**Dr. Don Robertson, Vice-President for Student Affairs:** Dr. Don Robertson reported on preparations for upcoming early Summer Orientation dates and Racer Days. He complimented Facilities Management on the appearance of the campus. Letters with scholarship awards and other information will be sent to students. He answered questions.  

**Dr. Josh Jacobs, Chief of Staff:** Dr. Jacobs complimented Dr. Morgan on the organization of preparations being made for the SACS accreditation review. He reported that at its recent meeting, the Board of Regents approved the new name for the College of Business: The Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business. The Board of Regents voted to not pursue any action regarding the library. He answered questions about the upcoming university budget.  

**Tom Hoffacker, Director of Human Resources:** Tom Hoffacker said employees who did not receive the most recent edition of the *Personnel Matters* newsletter were newly hired after August. The newsletter was sent to those employees this morning. He reported on the upcoming Health Fair and the Financial Well-Being and Retirement Fair, and answered questions. Questions and discussion followed about ensuring hourly staff have the opportunity to attend or view online recordings of presentations from the financial information fair.  

Laura Lohr-Dziekonski complimented Lauren Smee, Wellness Plan Coordinator, for providing employees with helpful information.  

**Staff Regent Report:** Staff Regent Phil Schooley presented his report of the Board of Regents’ March meeting. The Board has tentatively scheduled a meeting for April 27, to discuss the budget. The next regular Board meeting will be held on June 1. Phil presented a copy of the 2011 Staff Survey Results to Staff Congress. The survey results were presented to the Board of Regents at its March meeting and will be available on the Staff Congress webpage. The letter of support for Dr. Dunn from Staff Congress was presented to the Board at its March meeting as well. Phil answered questions.  

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES:** John Young made a motion to approve the February minutes as presented. Laura Lohr-Dziekonski seconded, and the motion carried.  

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY TREASURER’S REPORT:** Laura Lohr-Dziekonski presented the February Treasurer’s Report. John Young made a motion to approve the February Treasurer’s Report. Lana Jennings seconded, and the motion carried.  

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**  
**Executive Committee:** Gina Winchester said the Executive Committee met with Dr. Dunn on February 23, for the Faculty and Staff Leadership Committee Meeting. The university budget was the main topic of that meeting. Dr. Dunn plans to form a task force to develop suggestions for budget needs based on the state funding cuts for 2013-2014. Gina said Dr. Dunn will probably
ask the representative bodies to submit names of persons for consideration to be appointed to the task force. Names of persons not on Staff Congress may also be submitted for the task force.

Also discussed at the Faculty and Staff Leadership Meeting were plans for the Lunch and Learn sessions which provide wellness information.

The Executive Committee suggests Staff Congress hold an informal gathering for staff to meet the Staff Regent and Staff Congress Representatives. Possible dates were discussed. Staff can contact Gina with location ideas and other suggestions for the event.

Gina referred to Staff Congress Bylaw Article I, Section 5B, which addresses Congress member meeting attendance. She said because Staff Congress elections will be held in April, the Executive Committee will contact those Congress members who have missed three consecutive meetings to ask if they plan to run for re-election to Staff Congress.

Gina welcomed Cathy Bazaar who has agreed to serve the remainder of the term vacated by Susanne D’Angelo.

She thanked members who brought items to be taken to the Harrisburg, Illinois, tornado victims. Those who were unable to bring items today and want to participate may take them to the Waterfield Library before noon on March 16.

**Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee**: No report.

**Credentials and Elections Committee**: Orville Herndon explained the procedure used to determine which staff member to ask to fill Susanne D’Angelo’s term. He made a motion that Staff Congress appoint Cathy Bazaar to fill the remainder of Susanne D’Angelo’s term. Gina Winchester seconded, and the motion carried.

Orville reported on the status of the Staff Regent Election. He noted that some staff are not comfortable using myGate. Orville has discussed this with Casey Workman of Information Systems. For future elections, the Congress may want to consider having paper ballots for those not wanting to use myGate.

He presented a draft of the Staff Congress Election Candidacy Intent Form and asked that members contact him with suggestions or corrections. He answered questions. The Credentials and Elections Committee will meet after spring break.

**Staff Recognition Committee**: Dana Howard reported that she and Gina Winchester met with Dr. Dunn to request the Staff Recognition Awards amounts match those of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Awards beginning with the 2012 awards. The President has agreed to include this request in his priority projects to be presented to the Board of Regents.

The Staff Recognition Luncheon will be held on August 7. The Staff Recognition Award nomination form will be available online and a paper form will also be available. The Staff Recognition Committee will meet after spring break. She answered questions.

**Staff Special Events Committee**: No report.

**Communications Committee**: Laura Lohr-Dziekonski said March 16 is the deadline to submit items for the next Staff Congress newsletter.

**Working Conditions Committee**: Jerry O’Bryan reported that the Working Conditions Committee is discussing whether staff should be allowed to submit concerns anonymously or whether they should be required to include their names with requests. The committee cannot inform the employee of the resolution to the item presented if no contact information is provided. Congress members suggested various means of presenting issues anonymously.

Jerry noted that some staff have expressed concern as to who makes decisions regarding certain matters. Gina responded that with Staff Congress approval, she will ask Human Resources about the EEOC policy.

**Staff Congress Foundation Book Scholarship Committee**: Debbie Plummer thanked those who helped with the basketball game concession stand. She reported on the funds received for the textbook scholarship in return for working at the concession stand. The Scholarship Committee will meet in the spring or summer to discuss possible future fundraisers. Gina complimented the Scholarship Committee members for their hard work this year.
**AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

**Staff Congress Handbook Review Committee:** No report.

**UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:**

**Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee:** Debbie Plummer reported on the March meeting of the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee. The committee will meet again on April 13.

**Intercollegiate Athletic Council:** No report.

**Naming Campus Facilities:** No report.

**Judicial Board:** No report.

**Sick Leave Appeals Committee:** No report.

**International Studies Advisory Committee:** Gina Winchester said the next International Studies Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for April 11.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Jerry O’Bryan said that questions from staff can be better addressed if they are submitting in writing, but some staff do not want to provide a name with a request. Gina Winchester noted that procedures are in place to address some issues and persons should be provided with answers when using those means. Also, some issues require time to resolve or research and an answer cannot be provided instantaneously.

Billy R. Russell noted several staff members have indicated to him that they want to submit concerns anonymously.

Members suggested providing a form that staff can use to submit questions or concerns by mailing it to the Staff Congress mailbox. An online form can also be made available. Answers can be printed in the Staff Congress newsletter.

Dana Howard said she is receiving many inquiries on Twitter asking why the buildings are still being heated in spite of the current warm temperatures. Congress members answered that due to the processes involved in shutting down and starting up the heating and cooling systems, the heat can be turned off and the air turned on when we are past the dates when the outdoor temperatures might drop. Dana will post this response on Twitter.

Shanna Burgess said staff have contacted her wanting to know what items can be distributed via all-user email or the Roundabout newsletter. She also asked how to obtain campus-wide mailing labels. Sheri Riddle replied that only the President’s Office and the Office of Finance and Administrative Services can issue all-user emails.

Gina said she would ask Josh Jacobs to explain at the next Staff Congress meeting how departments are to distribute information throughout the university.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chuck Plummer made a motion to adjourn. Debbie Plummer seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.