Murray State University Staff Congress  
Draft Minutes for July 20, 2011  
Curris Center: Stables

PRESENT: Shanna Burgess, Christian Cruce, Tami Dandeneau, Susan D’Angelo, Laura Dziekonski, Liz Fain, Marion Hale, Orville Herndon, Wade Herndon, Margie Miller, Jerry O’Bryan, Chuck Plummer, Debbie Plummer, Tressa Ross, Billy R. Russell, Stephanie Totty, Rebecca Wilder, Tim Williams, Dwaine Willoughby, Gina Winchester, Janeen Winters, John Young, and Staff Regent Phil Schooley. Guests: Carmen Garland, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs; Josh Jacobs, Chief of Staff.

CALL TO ORDER: Staff Congress President Gina Winchester called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. Gina welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new fiscal year.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS: Josh Jacobs thanked Facilities Management for keeping the campus looking so nice, which he acknowledged is more difficult with so many student programs on campus. About 300 students participated in the Governor’s Scholars Program held at Murray State. Initial enrollment and housing numbers for fall look strong. He answered questions regarding the new parking lot near the stadium.

Josh said the Board or Regents will meet in Hopkinsville on August 26. He answered questions about the naming rights for the CFSB building and about the possibility of having an electronic sign on the area of campus bordered by Highway 121.

Gina said the Staff Congress Executive Committee meets regularly with Dr. Dunn and faculty representatives. Appropriate Staff Congress Committee Chairs are included in the meetings which address topics related to their committees.

Carmen Garland said the schedule for Great Beginnings and changes made to the event can be viewed on the Student Affairs webpage. It will be an evening program this year. She reported on new college heads.

Tom Hoffacker, Director of Human Resources, was out-of-town and unable to attend today’s Staff Congress meeting.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Phil Schooley reiterated that the Board of Regents will have a meeting and retreat August 25-26 in Hopkinsville. As of this morning, 35 nominations have been received for the Staff Excellence Awards. Phil noted that Carmen Garland will be retiring February 1; she will begin her vacation on August 18. He thanked her for her service to the university.

APPROVAL OF JUNE MINUTES: Laura Dziekonski noted a correction in the Reports from Special Guests. In the second sentence of the second paragraph of Dr. Don Robertson’s report, “Student” should replace “Academic” and the sentence should read as follows.

“In response, an information card is being distributed across campus which can be used to refer students to Student Affairs where the students can then be directed to the appropriate office(s) for assistance.”

Laura Dziekonski made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Christian Cruce seconded, and the motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: Laura Dziekonski presented the June Treasurer’s Report and the Year-to-Date Treasurer’s Report. Marion Hale made motion to approve the June Treasurer’s Report and the Year-to-Date Treasurer’s Report as presented. Christian Cruce seconded, and the motion carried. Laura explained that the Flower Fund is supported by donations from Staff Congress members.

Standing Committee Reports:  
Executive Committee: Gina reminded everyone that as discussed and voted on at the June 2011 Staff Congress meeting, the monthly Staff Congress meetings for the 2011-2012 fiscal year will be held on the third Wednesday of each month, except in December and March, due to the December and Spring Breaks. She asked staff to notify her of any conflicts with the new schedule.

For the benefit of the new members, Gina asked everyone to introduce himself and where he works. She complimented the group for the work everyone does on behalf of staff and said she is glad to lead and represent the group. She read Article III of the Staff Congress Constitution which states the organization’s purpose and again thanked Congress members for undertaking the important task of representing their co-workers. Gina expressed appreciation to Josh Jacobs, Dr. Dunn, and the University administration for recognizing the voices of the staff, faculty, and student groups. She listed the Staff Congress contact.
information: voice mail number, mailing address, and email address which are checked regularly. Staff may use these venues to contact the Congress Executive Committee at any time or they may speak to the Executive Committee directly.

Gina listed the Staff Congress and university-wide committees and distributed a handout of committee assignments. She asked members to inform her of questions, concerns, and any needed changes to the committee assignments. Discussion and re-assignments followed: Tim Williams was appointed to the Staff Recognition Committee and the Credentials and Elections Committee; Dwaine Willoughby requested and was granted a move from the Communications Committee to the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee.

Committee Chairs explained the responsibilities of their committees. Gina noted that the Communications Committee will be called on more this year than in years past due to the upcoming Staff Regent election in 2012. She welcomed suggestions. Gina said the Staff Recognition Committee works with the Staff Excellence Award. Staff Congress has been discussing whether to change the number of Staff Excellence Awards presented to three in each of three employment groups for a total of nine awards or to continue with the present structure of two awards in the three employment groups plus two awards in an at-large category, for a total of eight awards. A proposed change in the number of awards given would require approval by the Board of Regents.

Gina would like to meet with outgoing and incoming Congress Committee Chairs on August 9 immediately after the Staff Recognition Luncheon. She will email the location when it has been determined.

Josh Jacobs explain how employees are appointed to standing university-wide committees. Additional information about the university-wide committees can be found on the Board of Regents webpage.

Gina said she can invite speakers to Staff Congress meetings to answer questions and speak on topics of interest or concern to Staff Congress members and their co-workers. She added that she and Staff Regent Phil Schooley have been talking to Catherine Sivills, Assistant Vice-President for University Communications, about possible revisions to the Staff Survey.

Laura Dziekonski made a motion to approve the committee assignments as amended. Debbie Plummer seconded, and the motion carried.

**Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee:** No report. Stephanie Totty said the university-wide Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet in August. Gina added that those meetings are usually streamed live via Elluminate.

Gina said Tom Hoffacker will present to the Board of Regents at its August meeting proposed wording changes to the Sick Leave Policy that would align the policy with the Family Medical Leave Act. The board will vote on the proposed changes. He will explain the proposed changes at the August Staff Congress meeting.

Gina reported that the Board of Regents voted to allow the development of penalties for late leave reporting.

Billy Russell said some employees have asked him why retired employees who come back to work full-time for the university are not allowed to join the Sick Leave Bank. Phil Schooley and Jerry O’Bryan responded that persons cannot receive retirement benefits and simultaneously work as full-time employees. Gina said she will research this topic and bring a response to Staff Congress.

Gina announced that employees with 20+ years of continuous service to the university will receive free parking tags. Just as with all other university benefits, the 20 or more years of employment must be continuous and are based on employee status as of July 1, 2011.

**Credentials and Elections Committee:** Orville Herndon reported that Cheryl Hicks has resigned from Staff Congress. Liz Fain has agreed to complete the remainder of Cheryl’s term. Tami Dandeneau has agreed to serve the remainder of Johnathan Chancellor’s term. Orville made a motion to accept the appointments of Liz Fain and Tami Dandeneau to fill the remainder of the vacated terms. Marion Hale seconded, and the motion carried.

Orville will be scheduling a meeting of the Credential and Elections Committee probably in late August regarding Staff Congress and Staff Regent Elections. He will send an email to Congress members with the meeting date and location when they have been determined. He welcomes input regarding the elections.
Staff Recognition Committee: Terri Benton was unable to attend today’s Staff Congress meeting. Gina said Staff Congress will invite area businesses to set-up information tables at the vendor fair which will be held in conjunction with the Staff Recognition Luncheon on August 9. She encouraged everyone to attend the luncheon. Dr. Dunn will be out-of-town and therefore unable to attend the luncheon. Phil Schooley noted which board members are planning to attend the event.

Staff Special Events Committee: Janeen Winters reported that she and Laura Dziekonski purchased at the University store some door prizes for the December Staff Holiday Reception. She thanked the University Store for providing a 20% discount on the purchases. Laura added that Janeen is making preparations for the Children’s Christmas Party.

Gina asked the committee to generate some suggestions for an informal gathering to allow Staff Congress members to become acquainted with one another.

Communications Committee: Laura Dziekonski reported the committee will be mailing a newsletter after the Staff Recognition Luncheon. Staff can email suggestions or items for the newsletter to Laura, the Communications Committee members, or the Staff Congress Secretary.

Working Conditions Committee:
Sick Leave Bank—Jerry O’Bryan said some staff have a misunderstanding as to how and when to use the Sick Leave Bank, thinking of it as a savings bank from which an employee can make withdrawals. He asked that instructions about the Sick Leave Bank be distributed. Gina said Staff Congress should include this information in its newsletter and she will ask Human Resources to explain the Sick Leave Bank Policy in its newsletter.

Free Parking Permit for Employees with 20+ Years University Employment—Jerry said some staff have asked why a discount on parking permits is not given to all staff rather than providing free parking permits for only some. Some employees have expressed concern that in order to pay for the free parking tags, the university will increase the parking permit fee for everyone else. Jerry added that he explained to employees that this is a benefit for employees with 20 + years of employment with MSU.

Debbie Plummer responded that employees with 20+ years of employment cannot receive an increase in the number of vacation days accrued per year. The parking permit is the only additional benefit designed specifically for those employees. Gina said that she and Orville Herndon found that the cost to the university for the approximately 200 free parking permits is about $12,000, which is a small amount in the university budget. If the cost of the free permits were to be distributed to other employees, the increase would be only pennies per person. Orville added that in the past, Staff Congress requested an additional vacation day be accrued annually for those with 15 or 16 years of service, but many staff don’t use all their vacation days.

Buyback of Unused Vacation Days—Jerry has been asked if employees can sell back to the university some of their unused vacation time. Some employees say they have accumulated more vacation time than they can use. If selling back vacation days is approved, it could be allowed only for those with a certain number of accrued vacation days. Dwaine Willoughby added that he has also been asked about this. Gina said many people are losing some of their vacation days due to not being able to use them all before the forfeiture deadline. She asked the members of the Working Conditions Committee to ask their co-workers for input on this topic and then discuss it with Human Resources. Marion Hale said that a local facility does allow employees with a certain number of years of service to sell back one week of vacation time.

Time-off after Donating Blood—Jerry reported some staff have told him the state has a policy which permits employees to be off from work the remainder of the day after donating blood. Debbie Plummer commented that employees in certain positions are not supposed to return to work the same day they give blood. Gina thinks a university or state policy addressing the issue probably exists. She will research this and report back to Staff Congress. Laura Dziekonski suggested that possibly arrangements could be made for blood donation vehicles to stop at various areas of campus to provide donation opportunities.

Staff Congress Foundation Book Scholarship Committee: Debbie Plummer reported the committee will meet later in August. She will try to arrange a meeting with Jennie Rottinghaus, of the Office of Development, to develop a fundraiser for the scholarship. Guidelines and scholarship applications will be available at the Staff Recognition Luncheon. The guidelines have been reviewed and updated by Jennie Rottinghaus, Gina, and Debbie.

Gina and Debbie pointed out the changes made to the guideline changes. Questions and discussion followed. The Congress agreed to remove the following phrase in Item 6 of the guidelines: “unless materials are unavailable on site or cannot be ordered by the MSU bookstore.”
Chuck Plummer made a motion to approve the scholarship guidelines as amended. Christian Cruce seconded, and the motion carried.

**AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

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

**UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:**

**Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee:** No report.

**Intercollegiate Athletic Council:** No report.

**Naming Campus Facilities:** No report.

**Judicial Board:** No report.

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Staff Congress Office Location**—Gina reported that Staff Congress is in the process of looking for a new office location. The office is currently located in Ordway Hall. Discussion and suggestions followed.

**Staff Congress Banner**—Gina asked if the Congress would like to have the printing shop create a banner for Staff Congress. John Young suggested the banner would be useful at occasions such as the Staff Recognition Luncheon, the December events, employee appreciation night at the football games, and Staff Congress and Staff Regent Election polling locations. Members agreed to purchase a banner. Gina asked the Communications Committee to request price quotes to present to the Congress.

**Upcoming Campus Events**

John Young announced that on August 18, as many as 50 members of the Kentucky Legislature and the Joint Commission on Tourism and Economic Development will hold hearings on campus. They have been sent a letter from Dr. Dunn and will be given a bus tour of the campus.

On August 24, MSU will host an 8-state summit of Public Service Commissioners. The event will include education sessions as well as presentations from Ball State University faculty.

**ADJOURNMENT**—Marion Halle made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.