Murray State University Staff Congress  
Draft Minutes for November 16, 2011  
304 North Applied Science Building  

PRESENT: Terri Benton, Shanna Burgess, Tami Dandeneau, Susan D’Angelo, Orville Herndon, Dana Howard, Lana Jennings, Chuck Plummer, Debbie Plummer, Sheri Riddle, Tressa Ross, Billy R. Russell, Rebecca Wilder, Tim Williams, Lisa Willis, Dwaine Willoughby, Gina Winchester, Janee Winters, and John Young. Guests: Tom Hoffacker, Director of Human Resources; Josh Jacobs, Chief of Staff; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice-President for Student Affairs; Samantha Villanueva, MSU News; Morris White, Director of Marketing & Promotions, Athletics.  

CALL TO ORDER: Staff Congress President Gina Winchester called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.  

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS:  
Morris White, Director of Marketing & Promotions, MSU Athletics: Morris White explained that he oversees all marketing and promotion for all 19 MSU athletic programs. He coordinates game day components such as the music, t-shirt canon, Racer Girls performances, and the student assistants at the games. He wants fan to have fun and be engaged at athletic events. Mr. White encouraged staff to attend the Faculty and Staff Appreciation Night at the December 15 basketball game. The university community and public are invited to set a new attendance record at the women’s basketball game scheduled for February 6. 

Gina Winchester added that a note was sent to Allen Ward thanking him for the Staff and Faculty Appreciation Day at the October 29 home football game. She hopes MSU will continue that tradition.  

Don Robertson, Vice-President for Student Affairs: Dr. Robertson reminded staff that this is a time of high stress for students. He asked that staff refer to his office any students needing assistance. Warning signs of students experience high stress will be included in Roundabout. 

To enhance the quality of campus life for students and employees, MSU is working to meet the criteria necessary to receive a safe campus designation. Murray State would be the second university in the nation to receive the certification which includes a health and wellness component. On-site evaluations will be required and the university would need to apply for re-accreditation periodically.  

Tom Hoffacker, Director of Human Resources: Tom Hoffacker announced that Lauren Smee is the new Wellness Coordinator. Her office is located in Human Resources. His department is looking for a short-term disability insurance provider to replace the plan the current provider will discontinue in December. Questions followed concerning disability and the Sick Leave Bank. Mr. Hoffacker added that in order to match the definition in the FMLA, the definition of immediate family member in the Sick Leave Policy and other MSU policies will be changed when approved by the Board of Regents at its meeting on December 9. 

Orville Herndon asked if the proposed policy changes could be presented to Staff Congress or the University-wide Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee. Tom replied that the information was presented in March to the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee. Orville noted that other committees currently developing revisions and updates would be able to make those modifications consistent with the proposed policy changes if the committees could be presented with the final proposed changes. Gina Winchester asked if the proposed policy changes could be sent to her so that she can forward them to the Staff Congress Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee. 

Gina requested that newly appointed Wellness Coordinator Laura Smee speak at an upcoming Staff Congress meeting. Debbie Plummer asked if flu shots will be available on campus. Mr. Hoffacker replied that a flu shot distribution schedule has not yet been determined. 

A question was asked about how to register for HEA 189 which isn’t on the registration website. Gina will follow-up on that.  

Josh Jacobs, Chief of Staff: Josh Jacobs noted that he appreciates Tom Hoffacker’s, Dr. Don Robertson’s, and Morris White’s speaking at today’s Staff Congress meeting. He said that several changes may occur in preparation for the SACS re-accreditation. Although the accreditation review is not until 2014, the university is currently making preparations for the review. 

Josh asked employees to assist with the university’s efforts to save energy by unplugging appliances and computers before leaving for the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.
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Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Phil Schooley said the next Board of Regents meeting is scheduled for December 9. The board members will tour Ordway and Woods Halls and discuss plans for those buildings. He explained the status of the Staff Survey and the number of responses received so far. He thanked Beth Sloan for her work with the survey preparation and email distribution to staff. He will give a report of survey results in February or March 2012.

Phil presented the Staff Congress Handbook Review Committee report and the Naming Campus Facilities report on behalf of Christian Cruce who was unable to attend today’s Staff Congress meeting.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE: Staff Congress Handbook Review Committee: The Staff Congress Handbook Review Committee will meet on November 28, at 1:00.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEE: Naming Campus Facilities: The Naming Campus Facilities Committee has heard a recommendation. The details cannot be discussed at this time.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES: Orville Herndon noted a correction in the Credentials and Elections Committee report, second sentence. The online election of Staff Congress representatives will be held April 24-26, not April 4-26 as printed in the minutes. John Young made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Debbie Plummer seconded, and the motion carried.

OCTOBER TREASURER’S REPORT: Laura Dziekonski was unable to attend today’s meeting. Copies of the October Treasurer’s Report were distributed. Orville Herndon made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Debbie Plummer seconded, and the motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:
    Executive Committee: Gina Winchester reported that Staff Congress Executive Committee members John Young, Laura Dziekonski, and Gina met with Dr. Dunn and faculty representatives on November 3, 2011.

Gina said she has received an email from Dr. Peggy Pittman-Munke with the changes Faculty Senate would like to propose to the EEOC process. Gina has read the proposal and has asked University Legal Counsel as well as Sabrina Dial, Director of the University Office of Equal Opportunity, to determine if the Faculty Senate’s proposed changes address staff. If the proposal does not address staff, Gina will ask Staff Congress to consider what additions the group would like to add on behalf of staff.

Phil Schooley said that in the spring, he will ask Staff Congress for comments as part of the formal year-long review of Dr. Dunn.

The use of tuition waivers by children of employees who are not claimed as dependents on the employees’ tax returns is still being reviewed by Human Resources.

Gina apologized for the confusion with the date of the Staff and Faculty Appreciation basketball game. The correct date of the game is December 15, not January 14, as printed in the November Staff Congress newsletter.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: No report.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon said the Credentials and Elections Committee is working on the timeline for the Staff Regent and Staff Congress elections. The committee is awaiting approval from University Counsel concerning online voting.

Staff Recognition Committee: Dana Howard reported that she and Gina Winchester met with Tom Denton and Sharion Meloan to discuss the Staff Recognition Committee’s proposed changes to the Staff Excellence Awards as presented at the October Staff Congress meeting and whether or not to continue the Way to Go Award. Mr. Denton approved maintaining four categories for the Staff Excellence Award. Dana said Tom and Sharion do not want to schedule the Staff Recognition Luncheon prior to August 14 because some staff may be on vacation before returning for the fall semester.

Dana Howard made a motion that Staff Congress propose to Dr. Dunn to increase the Staff Excellence Award amount from $500 to $1,000 to match the amount given to recipients of the Outstanding Teaching Awards for Faculty. Debbie Plummer seconded. President Gina Winchester called for questions. Discussion followed. Orville Herndon moved that the motion be amended so that the award amount matches any future faculty award amounts. The motion was seconded. Gina Winchester asked for questions. There were none. The amendment passed. The motion passed.
Dana said the Staff Recognition Committee recommended nominations be received throughout the year, beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year. For 2011-2012, the nomination period will begin in January. Tom Denton and Sharion Meloan approved having year round nominations, but want the nomination period to end June 1. The possibility of allowing nominations to be submitted online was discussed. Details will need to be researched and University Counsel will need to approve online nomination submission. Paper nominations would still be accepted. The committee would like to find incentives to increase the number of nominations received. Due to tax implications of possible incentives to be given to nominators, the committee has tabled the discussion of incentives for now.

The Staff Recognition Luncheon was discussed, including possibly changing the length or order of the agenda to encourage attendees to stay for the entire program. Also discussed was whether to move the serving line to the foyer or to maintain its traditional location in the ballroom. After discussion, Congress members agreed to keep the agenda as is. Dana said the committee suggests offering a surprise at the end of the luncheon to encourage staff to stay through the entire luncheon program. Discussion followed. Dana asked Staff Congress members to look over the proposed changes to the Staff Excellence Award nomination form and give her any comments about the form.

Dana said Mr. Denton supports the recommendation by Staff Congress and the Staff Recognition Committee to discontinue the Way to Go Award. At its next meeting, the Staff Recognition Committee will discuss what to do with the two Way to Go Award nominations recently received.

Staff Special Events Committee: Janeen Winters thanked everyone who brought candy for the Children’s Christmas Party. Flyers for the Children’s Christmas Party and the Staff Reception were taken to the university post office today and will be distributed tomorrow.

For the Staff Congress meal before the December 15 Faculty and Staff Appreciation basketball game, Congress members agreed to have the meal at a restaurant that offers a rebate, with the funds to go to the Marie Jones Textbook Scholarship. The Staff Special Events Committee will meet to determine a restaurant location for the meal.

Communications Committee: No report.

Working Conditions Committee: No report.

Staff Congress Foundation Book Scholarship Committee: Debbie Plummer distributed a list of items donated for the textbook scholarship fundraiser. The corn hole game at the Faculty and Staff Appreciation football game collected $41. A silent auction of donated items will be held at the Children’s Christmas Party and at the Staff Reception. The details are still being determined. Debbie asked staff to let her know of any businesses that might donate items for the silent auction.

Gina Winchester noted she received an email from Marie Jones asking where to send a donation for the scholarship.

Debbie said the University Foundation informed her that scholarship funds cannot be used to purchase tins to display the donated items for the silent auction. The other Staff Congress Foundation fund can be used to purchase the tins or someone can donate them. Gina Winchester volunteered to donate the tins. Thank you notes will be sent to the donors. Scholarship applications will be available at the Children’s Party and Staff Reception.

AD-HOC COMMITTEES
Staff Congress Handbook Review Committee: No report.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:
Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Debbie Plummer reported that at its last meeting, the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee discussed tuition waiver use by children of employees not claimed as dependents on the employees’ tax returns. The topic is still under discussion by a sub-committee which will meet November 18.

Phil Schooley added that Human Resources has concluded that a child claimed for any year as a dependant on an employee’s tax return may use the tuition waivers even if the child is not claimed during the current year. Discussion followed. Tressa Jones noted that FAFSA recognizes only the income of the parent with whom the child resides even if custody of the child is shared by both parents.
**Intercollegiate Athletic Council:** No report.

**Naming Campus Facilities:** No report.

**Judicial Board:** No report.

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

**International Studies Advisory Committee:** On behalf of committee member Gina Winchester who was unable to attend the meeting, John Young attended today’s meeting of the newly formed International Studies Advisory Committee. Because today’s meeting was the committee’s first, the purpose was to discuss the organizational foundation of the group. Gina and John will report on the committee’s periodic meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for February 8, at 3:00 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Staff Congress Banner:** Gina had hoped to have a group photo of Congress members taken at today’s meeting. Dana Howard will have some photos taken for the banner.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** John Young made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tressa Jones seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.