

Murray State University Staff Congress
Draft Minutes for November 20, 2013
304 North Applied Science Building

PRESENT: James Barnett, Shanna Burgess, Jessica Evans, Debbie Griffin, Marion Hale, Orville Herndon, Dana Howard, Laura Lohr-Dziekonski, Ann Matheny, Margie Miller, Jerry O'Bryan, Evan O'Neal, Chuck Plummer, Debbie Plummer, Sheri Riddle, Ashley Rogers, Tressa Ross, Stephanie Totty, Daniel Williams, Tim Williams, Lisa Willis, Dwaine Willoughby, Joseph Wilson, Gina Winchester, Lisa Winchester, Chad Wortham, and John Young.

Guests: Jackie Dudley, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services; Dr. Renee Fister, Faculty Regent; Tom Hoffacker, Director, Human Resources; Chris Jeter, Assistant Registrar for Veteran and Military Services, Office of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Tim Miller, Interim University President; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice-President for Student Affairs; and Phil Schooley, Staff Regent.

CALL TO ORDER: Staff Congress President John Young called the meeting to order.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS:

Dr. Tim Miller, Interim University President: Dr. Miller talked about the enrollment plan and the effect that increased enrollment would have on the budget. He met with the vice-presidents to assign budget reduction recommendations for evaluation of potential cost savings. Dr. Miller welcomes questions and comments as well as staff input on cost savings. He answered questions.

Dr. Don Robertson, Vice-President for Student Affairs: Dr. Robertson reminded staff that this time of the semester increases stress for students. He asked staff to encourage students to seek counseling if needed. He reported on retention efforts in his office and listed upcoming campus events for November and December. Dr. Robertson thanked Staff Congress for sponsoring the Christmas party for children of staff and faculty. He encouraged staff to respond to the Health Services survey sent by email. In January, the university will open a food bank similar to Need Line which will be available for students.

Jackie Dudley, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services: Jackie Dudley welcomed questions.

Tom Hoffacker, Director, Human Resources: Tom Hoffacker reported on open enrollment. He explained two policy changes concerning the Sick Leave Bank to be presented to the Board of Regents. Mr. Hoffacker gave an update on the university president search. He answered questions.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Phil Schooley said the banner with the photos of the Staff Excellence Award recipients has been completed. He reported on the Staff Survey. He began a discussion about providing supplies for students and their families who were affected by the November 17 tornadoes.

Faculty Regent Report: Faculty Regent Dr. Renee Fister said that when she meets MSU students away from campus, they have positive comments about the support provided by the MSU community in assisting students toward graduation. She reminded staff of the upcoming presentation by Dr. Constantine Curris on December 5 as part of the Adventure Lecture Series.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES: James Barnett made a motion to approve the October minutes. Laura Lohr-Dziekonski seconded, and the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Sheri Riddle presented the October Treasurer's Report. Marion Hale made a motion to approve the October Treasurer's Report as presented. James Barnett seconded, and the motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee: John Young said that Executive Committee items relate to other agenda items and will be presented with those items throughout today's meeting.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon said a vacancy exists in the General/Facilities Management category.

Staff Recognition Committee: No report.

Staff Special Events Committee: Shanna Burgess reported on plans for the Children's Christmas Party. She distributed volunteer sign-up sheets for the staff reception and the children's party.

Communications Committee: Laura Lohr-Dziekonski said the newsletter has been mailed. Flyers for December events will be sent in the next few weeks.

Working Conditions Committee: Jerry O'Bryan said he has been asked by Facilities Management to remind drivers to avoid hitting the pedestrian crosswalk signs and to practice vehicle safety, especially near pedestrians.

Staff Congress Foundation Book Scholarship Committee: Debbie Plummer reported on the textbook scholarship fundraising silent auction that will be held at the December 12 staff reception. She asked for donation of university items from departments for the silent auction. John Young encouraged Staff Congress members to ask their departments to donate items for auction.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: Stephanie Totty reported on the October 25 meeting of the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee. At that meeting, the committee discussed the resolutions adopted by the SGA and Faculty Senate requesting that undergraduate tuition waivers be provided for extended family dependents of eligible university employees. The Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee compiled its discussion into a memo to committee members. At its November 15 meeting, the university-wide Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee concluded that it should be given the opportunity to address the topic of tuition waivers for extended family dependents of eligible university employees by reviewing the Faculty Senate and SGA resolutions as well as any other related information, including any effects on the budget. A subcommittee of the university-wide Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits committee has been formed to review related information to present to the committee in January.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Sheri Riddle said that at the November 15 meeting of the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee, a recommendation was made requesting that employees with the high deductible health insurance plan be required to pay a premium. The amount would be dependent on a currently undefined median income level. Those enrolled in the high deductible plan currently have no premium. No action was taken on the recommendation.

John Young said he has been contacted regarding the university policy for U.S. Armed Forces Reserve and National Guard leave. The university policy provides employees with 10 days leave for military reserve or National Guard duty. The policy for Kentucky state employees provides 21 days leave for military reserves duty. John has been asked to have Staff Congress address the difference in the two policies. Tom Hoffacker, noting that he consulted the university's legal department, provided additional information. Mr. Hoffacker said that state regulations do not require other Kentucky institutions to match the state's policy. Discussion followed. John Young directed the Staff Congress Personnel Policy and Benefits Committee to address the issue of the 10-day military leave policy at MSU as compared to the 21-day policy for state employees. Staff Congress member Ashley Rogers introduced Chris Jeter, Assistant Registrar for Veterans and Military Services and an active member of the Army National Guard, to answer questions on the topic.

John Young said the President's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion has requested a Dual Career/Policy Program Task Force be formed to develop a dual career policy with the purpose of assisting the significant other of a potential university employee in seeking employment in the area. John said he was asked to make an appointment to the task force and has appointed Debbie Plummer.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council: Sheri Riddle reported on the October 23 meeting of the Intercollegiate Athletic Council.

Naming Campus Facilities Committee: Gina Winchester said that its recent meeting, the Naming Campus Facilities Committee entertained two naming proposals to be presented to the Board of Regents at its December 6 meeting.

Judicial Board: No report.

Sick Leave Appeals Committee: No report.

International Studies Advisory Committee: No report.

MSU 100: Sheri Riddle reported on the recent meeting of the MSU 100 Committee. She explained the group's structure and its purpose. The committee will prepare an academic plan to be presented to the new university president.

AD HOC COMMITTEE:

Campus Appearance and Improvements: No report.

By Laws Update—Textbook Scholarship: No report.

OLD BUSINESS:

Staff and Faculty/Professional Luncheons: John Young read the letter that was sent to him and the Faculty Senate President from Interim University President Dr. Tim Miller and the four university vice-presidents requesting feedback concerning the Staff and Faculty/Professional Luncheons in regards to spending and operational efficiencies.

Stephanie Totty made a motion to open the discussion on this topic that was tabled at the October Staff Congress meeting. The motion was seconded, and the motion carried. Laura Lohr-Dziekonski made the following motion as read by John Young.

That the Staff Congress, recognizing the need by Murray State University to operate in a more cost effective manner and as efficiently as possible within the constraints imposed by the current economic climate does hereby reply to the letter of September 19, 2013, from the Interim President and the four Vice-Presidents regarding the Faculty/Professional Staff Luncheon and the Staff Recognition Day Luncheon with the following recommendations:

1. The Staff Recognition Day Luncheon be continued as a luncheon and not changed to a breakfast as there is a large number of staff who work afternoon or evening shifts;
2. The Faculty/Professional Staff Luncheon/Breakfast decision be deferred to the Faculty Senate as to which they prefer;
3. That Professional Staff (exempt employees) be asked to choose which event each individual wishes to attend thus reducing the duplication of meals.

The motion was seconded. President John Young asked for discussion.

Sheri Riddle made a motion to strike provision three of the motion. Orville Herndon seconded. John Young asked if there was any discussion. James Barnett called for the question. The motion carried.

Laura Lohr-Dziekonski made an amendment to suspend the Staff Recognition Day Luncheon for 2014-2015 with the provision that the decision of whether or not to have a luncheon as part of Staff Recognition Day be reviewed each year. The motion was seconded. John Young asked for discussion. The question was called. The motion carried with one opposed.

Dana Howard made a motion to amend the amended motion, recommending that a staff recognition event be held for 2014-2015. The motion was seconded. The question was called. The motion carried.

James Barnett made a motion to vote on the amended motion as read. The motion was seconded. The question was called.

The final motion passed as follows.

That the Staff Congress, recognizing the need by Murray State University to operate in a more cost effective manner and as efficiently as possible within the constraints imposed by the current economic climate does hereby reply to the letter of September 19, 2013, from the Interim President and the four Vice-Presidents regarding the Faculty/Professional Staff Luncheon and the Staff Recognition Day Luncheon with the following recommendation:

The Staff Recognition Day Luncheon be suspended for fiscal year 2014-2015, with the provision that it be reviewed each year. We, however, will have a staff recognition event.

NEW BUSINESS:

Laura Lohr-Dziekonski asked for discussion on the Budget Task Force Subcommittee Recommendations. Discussion followed. Stephanie Totty made a motion to form an ad hoc committee to review and gather staff concerns regarding the Budget Task Force Subcommittee Recommendations. Discussion followed as to the purpose of the ad hoc committee. The motion carried. Congress President John Young will make appointments to the ad hoc committee.

Jerry O'Bryan said that concerning budget efficiencies, the university hosts an annual luncheon for Murray City administrators. Orville Herndon said the Executive Officers can discuss this with Dr. Miller at their meetings with him.

ADJOURNMENT: Marion Hale made a motion to adjourn. Debbie Plummer seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.