MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Staff Congress Member Retreat Minutes August 8, 2025
Approved by Staff Congress August 20, 2025

Present: Ken Ashlock, Dedrick Brooks, Hannah, Durbin, Duane Dycus, Gerry Harris, Abby Hensley, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, BJ Johnson, Trish Lofton, David Looney, Carlos Lopez, Jeremy McKeel, Samantha Matuszak, Audrey Neal, Kim Newbern, Tressa Ross, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Kristen Swisher, Justin W. Thomas, Josh Tillson, Jenni Todd, Karami Underwood, Brian Williams, Lisa Willis, Casey Workman

Absent: Jodi Hanneman, David Shelton

Guests: Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President; Dr. J. David Wilson, Staff Regent

Welcome: President Audrey Neal welcomed everyone.

Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President: Dr. Ron Patterson gave an overview of his first weeks as Murray State University President. He walked through the academic buildings and residential halls with Jason Youngblood, Assistant Vice President of Facilities Management. Dr. Patterson gave a presentation of Murray State's needs and priorities to Kentucky legislature members in Frankfort and has spoken with over 20 legislature representatives since he began serving as University President. He will meet with Senator Mitch McConnell when he visits the Murray State campus later in August. The first floor of Oakhurst will be used as a gallery to display art from the university's College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Dr. Patterson plans to send communiques to faculty and staff quarterly and as needed.

Icebreaker:
President Neal asked Staff Congress members to discuss with those seated near them their Racer stories, or why they first came to Murray State, whether it was as a student, or through employment. Next, she asked attendees to write on index cards their reasons for joining Staff Congress.

Brief Overview of Staff Congress:
President Neal explained the purpose and function of Staff Congress. She reviewed portions of the Staff Congress Constitution and Bylaws.

Importance of Attendance:
President Neal discussed the attendance policy as stated in the Staff Congress Bylaws. She encouraged staff to attend Staff Congress meetings in-person as much as possible. Attending meetings in-person allows for dialogue and discussion more easily than attending by Zoom. Attendance by Zoom is an option due to work responsibilities or working from an extended campus location. Ms. Neal asked Congress members to contact her if their supervisors restrict Staff Congress members' attendance at Staff Congress meetings.

Open Discussion to Establish 2025-26 Goals and Objectives:
President Neal distributed copies of the Staff Congress 2024-2025 Goals and Objectives and suggested goals for 2025-2026. The suggested goals for 2025-2026 were taken from comments received on the 2024-2025 Staff Survey. She asked Staff Congress members for their feedback and discussion of which three goals the Congress would like to develop for the 2025-2026 Goals and Objectives. Discussion followed. President Neal noted that sticky notes were placed on each table for attendees to write additional ideas they would like Staff Congress to discuss in the future.

The group chose the following three goals for 2025-2026: 1)compensation and benefits improvement; 2)advocacy and representation; 3)support for new and current employee development.

President Neal assigned one of the three goals to each table of Staff Congress members. Each group discussed the assigned goal and developed four or five steps to accomplish the goal. Ms. Neal will compile the goals and steps into a

draft document which will be sent to Staff Congress members. At a future meeting, staff Congress will discuss and vote on the approval of the goals and objectives. The steps will be assigned to the appropriate Staff Congress committees.

Committee Chair Training:
President Neal emailed the Staff Congress 2025-2026 Committee Assignment List to Staff Congress members prior to the Staff Congress Retreat. Orville Herndon made a motion to approve the Staff Congress 2025-2026 Committee Assignment List. Trish Lofton seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

President Neal invited the committee chairs to attend the next meeting of the Staff Congress Executive Officers. Chairs who are unable to attend the August meeting of the officers may attend the September officer's meeting. Committee chairs have the option of appointing a vice committee chair. Committee chairs will be given access to the Staff Congress shared drive.

Staff Congress Textbook Scholarship Committee Chair Joshua Hutson has resigned from Staff Congress. Karami Underwood has agreed to chair that committee.

The Staff Congress Committees hold virtual meetings. The Executive Officers will give specific assignments to the committees.

Closing Remarks:
Before collecting the index cards members used to write their reasons for joining Staff Congress, President Neal asked attendees to write a goal they hope to accomplish this year as a Staff Congress member.

Gerry Harris distributed flyers for the CALM (Cruise and Landmark Meditation) event to be held at the Hancock Biological Station on September 12, 2025.

Trish Lofton said shuttle bus drivers are needed for Great Beginnings which begins on August 13. A link to sign up to drive a shuttle bus is in the August 8 Racer Nation Information, or staff may contact Ms. Lofton.

Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson said volunteers are needed to help students and families with moving into the residential halls on August 15 and 16, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Duane Dycus said he relayed parking concerns discussed at the July 16, 2025 Staff Congress meeting to Parking Services. Parking Services is ticketing incorrectly parked personal vehicles of construction staff. Details of the response from Parking Services concerning incorrectly parked personal vehicles of construction staff was emailed to all staff from Staff Congress President Audrey Neal on August 3. □