MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Minutes for December 17, 2025--Approved by Staff Congress January 21, 2026
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Emily Asher, Ken Ashlock, Dedrick Brooks, Hannah Durbin, Duane Dycus, Abby Hensley, Orville Herndon, Kelsey Johnson, Bobby Koehler, Trish Lofton, David Looney, Carlos Lopez, Jeremy McKeel, Audrey Neal, Tressa Ross, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Kristen Swisher, Justin Thomas, Karami Underwood, Brian Williams, Casey Workman

Absent: Gerry Harris, Dayna Hutchinson, BJ Johnson, Kim Newbern, David Shelton, Jenni Todd, Lisa Willis

Guests: Michael Bordieri, Faculty Senate President; Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. David Wilson, Staff Regent; Dr. Gary ZeRuth, Faculty Regent

CALL TO ORDER: Staff Congress President Audrey Neal called the meeting to order.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:
Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President: University President Dr. Ron Patterson thanked staff for their work during the fall semester and wished staff a restful break. He reported on the status of the Provost search and the VPFAS/CFO search.

He asked staff to remember Kim Newbern in their thoughts and prayers.

Dr. Patterson will send a summary of the December Board of Regents meeting. The Kentucky legislative session will begin in January. Dr. Patterson will travel to Frankfort for part of the legislative session. The search for an Executive Director of Government and Institutional Relations has been paused. A job audit of the position will be conducted before the search is resumed. Dr. Patterson provided an update on the status of a school of veterinary medicine at Murray State.

Staff Congress members thanked Dr. Patterson for attending the Staff Recognition Reception.

Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs: Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Don Robertson provided an update on enrollment for the upcoming winter term and the spring and fall 2026 terms. He thanked Ken Ashlock, Jordan Brock, and the staff in Student Disability Services for their work proctoring exams for students during the semester and during finals week.

Ken Ashlock complimented Jordan Brock and the graduate students and staff in Student Disability Services for their work proctoring exams.

Dr. Robertson thanked Dr. Patterson for mentioning Kim Newbern. He asked staff to keep Ms. Newbern in their thoughts and prayers. He thanked Trish Lofton for helping Ms. Newbern. He also thanked Ashley Ireland, President of the Red Cross, for the assistance the Red Cross has provided to Ms. Newbern.

Dr. Robertson thanked staff for their work with students.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson will send a Staff Regent report from the December Board of Regents meeting. He said the recordings of the Board of Regents meeting, the ROTC ceremony, the Staff Recognition Reception, and Commencement are posted on the university's website. He thanked Sharion Meloan, Monica Knight, and

Kim Newbern for planning the Staff Recognition Reception. He thanked staff for their work which contributes to the graduation of students.

Dr. Wilson thanked Dr. and Mrs. Patterson, Dr. Robertson, Director of University Counseling Services Dr. Angie Trzepacz, and Richmond Residential College Head Dr. Tanna Field-Bartholomew for meeting with the family of a student who passed away earlier in December. He thanked the Housing Staff for supporting the family. Dr. Robertson and Murray State Police Officer Thomas Reynolds attended the student's funeral.

Dr. Wilson said he appreciates all staff do and wished them a good break.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Abby Hensley made a motion to approve the November 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes. Dedrick Brooks seconded. President Neal asked if there were any corrections or discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT:
Approval of October 2025 Treasurer's Report: Tressa Ross made a motion to approve the October 2025 Treasurer's Report. Dedrick Brooks seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the question. The motion carried.

Approval of November 2025 Treasurer's Report: Trish Lofton made a motion to approve the November 2025 Treasurer's Report. Abby Hensley seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the question. The motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Executive Committee: President Neal reported that at the December meeting, the Executive Committee discussed preparations for the Staff Recognition Reception. She thanked Sharion Meloan and Monica Knight in the office of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services, and Jill Hunt in the President's Office for their work to plan the event. She also thanked Dr. Heath Keller and the Staff Excellence Award Selection Committee for their work.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon made a motion to appoint Robert (Bobby) Koehler to complete the remainder of Josh Hutson's term on Staff Congress. Trish Lofton seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

Mr. Herndon said a Staff Congress opening exists in the Academic Affairs category. The Credentials and Elections Committee has contacted the staff member who received the next highest number of votes in the April 2025 Staff Congress Election. The committee is waiting for a decision from the staff member as to whether or not that person will accept appointment to Staff Congress to complete the remainder of the vacant term.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: No report.

Communications Committee: Jeremy McKeel said the Communications Committee will post on social media the pictures from the Staff Recognition Reception. Photos of Racer Spirit Award presentations will also be posted on social media.

President Neal asked staff to forward staff accomplishments and recognitions to Mr. McKeel to post on Staff Congress social media.

Working Conditions Committee: Abby Hensley reported that the Working Conditions Committee has paused meetings while Working Conditions Committee Chair BJ Johnson is serving on the hiring committees for the vacant university positions. The committee plans to contact other universities in January to request information about working conditions.

Staff Survey Committee: Dedrick Brooks reported that the Staff Survey Committee tentatively plans to send the Staff Survey to staff at the beginning of the spring semester.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Karami Underwood said the Textbook Scholarship Committee will promote the spring semester scholarships in January. She thanked the Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee members for their work planning the Staff Recognition Reception. Ms. Underwood expressed appreciation for the Staff Excellence Award she received.

President Neal added that spring scholarship applications are due February 1.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: Trish Lofton said she emailed Assistant Vice President of Finance Wendy Cain with questions regarding employee tuition waivers and fees. She will follow-up with Ms. Cain after the holiday break.

Community Involvement and Access Committee: Kristen Swisher reported that the Community Involvement and Access Committee met in November to identify potential presenters for the May 2026 Staff Success Week. The committee has contacted those persons to ask if they can present at the event. The committee will meet again following today's Staff Congress meeting to continue planning Staff Success Week. After the holiday break, the committee will meet with the Staff Congress Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee to plan a kick-off event for the May Staff Success Week.

President Neal said staff can send ideas for encouraging staff morale to Staff Congress officers. The officers will forward the ideas to the appropriate committees.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon listed the spring semester meeting dates for the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: January 16, February 20, March 13, April 17. Meetings begin at 9:30 on Zoom. At the committee's December meeting, the subcommittees presented their reports. Questions for the committee may be sent to Mr. Herndon.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council: No report.

Naming Campus Facilities Committee: Dedrick Brooks reported that three naming proposals were approved at the December Board of Regents meeting: the *Fitch Family Head Coach Suite* inside the Jim and Sue Cash Baseball Clubhouse; the *Sandra Hartmann Press Box* at Racer Field; and the *William "Max" McCuiston Assistant Coach Office* in the Gene Wells Ray Center.

Judicial Board: No report.

Sick Leave Appeals Committee: No report.

International Studies Advisory Committee: No report.

Budget Advisory Committee: President Neal reported that the Budget Advisory Committee met to discuss topics for the committee's future meetings. She asked Dr. Patterson if he would like to add to the report.

Dr. Patterson said that at the Budget Advisory Committee meeting, fully using the committee as a collaborator and partner in decision-making was discussed. The Strategic Planning Committee has been paused while the searches for the Provost and VPFAS/CFO are in progress. The plan is to resume the Strategic Planning Committee meetings in the spring. At the Budget Advisory Committee meeting, COLAs were discussed. Data is being gathering regarding the frequency and amount of past cost-of-living increases and the impact of COLAs at different percentages. The committee also discussed

fulfilling phase three of the Evergreen Study and compression with staff and faculty positions. Dr. Patterson said presenting the budget in February or March, instead of June, will allow students time to plan when the budget contains tuition increases.

President Neal added that a recommendation was made at the committee meeting to provide students with materials concerning resources when costs increase, as well as promoting scholarships.

Discussion followed concerning informing returning students in addition to new students of resources, how to accept awards, offering competitive wages for student jobs, and informing parents of resources for students.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee: No report.

Dr. Patterson added that the lights in the new parking lot on 16th Street are scheduled to be fully functional after the break.

Staff Regent Dr. Wilson said he, Dr. Patterson, Dr. Robertson, and others were given a tour of the campus lightening. The tour is given in the fall and spring.

Discussion followed with requests for a speed table in front of the Business Building and a crosswalk in front of the Howton Agricultural Engineering Building.

Affirmative Action Committee: No report.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:
Business List Revision Committee: President Neal said the Business List Revision Committee has completed its work and is no longer needed. She thanked the committee members for their work. The updated Business Discount List is available on the Staff Congress website.

Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

INFORMATION ITEMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Trish Lofton made a motion to adjourn. Orville Herndon seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.