MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Draft Minutes for August 19, 2026
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Johnny Anthony, Emily Asher, Ken Ashlock, Dedrick Brooks, Duane Dycus, Hannah Garner, Gerry Harris, Abby Hensley, Orville Herndon, BJ Johnson, Kelsey Johnson, Robert Koehler, Trish Lofton, David Looney, Carlos Lopez, Julianne McClain, Jeremy McKeel, Audrey Neal, Tressa Ross, Amy Sanders, Jillian Smith, Taylor Snell, Mary Steely, Brandon Story, Kristen Swisher, Justin Thomas, Karami Underwood, Brian Williams, Casey Workman

Absent: Meagan Brawner

Guests: Dr. Michael Bordieri, Faculty Senate President; Wendy Cain, Assistant Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services; Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President; Camela Ramey; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. Paul Twigg, Provost; Dr. David Wilson, Staff Regent

CALL TO ORDER: Staff Congress President Jeremy McKeel called the meeting to order.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:
Dr. Paul Twigg, Provost: Dr. Paul Twigg said staff are an important part of student success. He said staff may contact him with questions. Dr. Twigg would like Murray State to partner with the Gardner Institute as part of improving student success.

Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs: Dr. Don Robertson thanked staff for helping with student move-in and Welcome Week activities. He thanked Trish Lofton and Kade Gambill for coordinating Welcome Week. Dr. Robertson provided an update on enrollment and retention.

Financial Aid and the Scholarship Office have been moved under Student Affairs as part of Enrollment Management. Interviews have been held for a Director of Financial Aid. Events held earlier on August 19 included A Purple Heart Signing Ceremony and the Career Services cookout. On August 20, a meet-and-greet for first generation students, faculty, and staff will be held. Dr. Robertson thanked staff for their work.

Wendy Cain, Assistant Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services: Wendy Cain said the budget was approved in June. Budgets from previous years were analyzed as part of preparing the budget for FY 27.

Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President: Dr. Ron Patterson provided an update on campus projects. He said that Dr. Wilson, David Looney, and others helped with the transition to move students out of College Courts. The leadership team is preparing the university's requests for the upcoming legislative session.

Dr. Michael Bordieri, Faculty Senate President: Dr. Michael Bordieri said Faculty Senate appreciates the opportunity to work with Staff Congress.

Staff Regent Report: Dr. David Wilson encouraged staff to visit the Wellness Center now that the refresh has been completed. The Board of Regents retreat is scheduled for August 27. The quarterly Board of Regents meeting will be held on August 28. The meeting on August 28 will be live-streamed. The Staff Congress officers will present the Staff Survey Results at the August 28 board meeting.

Dr. Patterson added that Staff Congress will be on the agenda for future August meetings of the Board of Regents.

Dr. Wilson said the learning commons will include a residential area, dining option, meeting rooms, technology area, and common areas. Staff may contact him or Staff Congress leadership with questions. He thanked staff for their work. Dr. Wilson thanked Trish Lofton for organizing Welcome Week.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of June 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes and July 15, 2026 Retreat Minutes: President McKeel asked if there were any corrections to the June 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes or to the July 15, 2026 Retreat Minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Abby Hensley made a motion to approve the June 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes and the July 15, 2026 Retreat Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded. President McKeel asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he called for the vote. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT:

Approval of May, June, July 2026 Treasurer's Reports: President McKeel asked if there were any corrections to the May, June, or July 2026 Treasurer's Reports. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports. Trish Lofton made a motion to approve the May, June, and July 2026 Treasurer's Reports. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee: President McKeel said the Executive Committee met to prepare the presentation of the Staff Survey Results to the Board of Regents.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon introduced Johhny Anthony and made a motion to appoint Mr. Anthony to complete the remainder of Kim Newbern's term on Staff Congress. The motion was seconded. The motion carried. The Credentials and Elections Committee will set the date for the Staff Regent Election to be held in the spring.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: Trish Lofton said she will send a Doodle Poll to members of the Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee to determine a meeting date for the committee. At the meeting, the committee will set dates for events and discuss information from the Staff Survey that applies to the committee.

Communications Committee: Jeremy McKeel said that Jill Smith will chair the Communications Committee.

Working Conditions Committee: Robert Koehler will look at the work the committee has completed and what the committee is currently discussing. He will schedule a meeting for the committee.

President McKeel requested that outgoing committee chairs pass committee information to incoming chairs.

Staff Survey Committee: Dedrick Brooks said that brief surveys can be sent to him to distribute to staff.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Karami Underwood reported on the amount the scholarship fund will receive from the July 30 fundraiser at Panera. President McKeel thanked Ms. Underwood for organizing the fundraiser.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: No report.

Community Involvement and Access Committee: Audrey Neal said she will be working with outgoing Community Involvement and Access Committee Chair Kristen Swisher to transition into the Chair position. The committee will discuss feedback received from last year's events and plan events for the upcoming year.

Regarding the Staff Congress 2026-2027 Goals and Objectives, most of the Staff Congress committees, with the exception of the Scholarship Committee and the Credentials and Elections Committee will be assigned tasks from the Goals and Objectives.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon said the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will set a date for its organizational meeting. At that meeting, the committee will determine a chair and secretary for the academic year. The meetings are open to the public. Questions for the committee may be sent to Mr. Herndon, current chair of the committee, or to other members of the committee.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council: No report.

Naming Campus Facilities Committee: Dedrick Brooks reported that the Naming Campus Facilities Committee discussed multiple naming proposals. The details cannot be reported at this time.

Judicial Board: No report.

Budget Advisory Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee: No report.

Affirmative Action Committee: No report.

Strategic Planning Committee: No report.

Campus Fee Advisory Group: Audrey Neal said the Campus Fee Advisory Group will meet soon.

University Policies Workgroup: No report.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: Orville Herndon said the Staff Regent Bylaws Committee is waiting for the updated Kentucky Revised Statutes to be published to determine if any changes have been made to the statute concerning Staff Regents.

Extended Campus Committee: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Approval of Staff Congress 2026-2027 Goals and Objectives: Audrey Neal said she received comments from Staff Congress representatives regarding the Goals and Objectives for 2026-2027. She will share the comments with the Staff Congress committees. The Committees will decide how to move forward with the Goals and Objectives. Trish Lofton made a motion to approve the Staff Congress 2026-2027 Goals and Objectives. Dedrick Brooks seconded. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Staff Congress 2026-2027 Meeting Dates: President McKeel asked if there was any discussion concerning the 2026-2027 Staff Congress meeting dates. There was none. Robert Koehler made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Staff Congress meeting dates. Mary Steely seconded. The motion carried.

Approval of 2026-2027 Committee Assignments: President McKeel asked if there was any discussion regarding the Staff Congress 2026-2027 Committee Assignments. There was none. Tressa Ross made a motion to approve the Staff Congress 2026-2027 Committee Assignments. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

INFORMATION ITEMS: Dedrick Brooks reminded employees to complete Title IX Training and Employee Harassment training.

Jill Smith thanked Dr. Heath Keller for sponsoring the mocktail event hosted by the College of Business. The event is scheduled for August 21. Staff are invited to attend.

Trish Lofton thanked staff for volunteering during student move-in and Welcome Week. She has received positive feedback from parents regarding move-in.

Abby Hensley said the Leadership by Design presentation will be held August 25. The speaker will be Darren Woodson. The event is free, but registration is required in order to plan for parking.

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