MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Minutes for April 16, 2025—Approved by Staff Congress May 21, 2025
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Dedrick Brooks, Tami Dandeneau, Duane Dycus, Jodi Hanneman, Gerry Harris, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, B.J. Johnson, Trish Lofton, David Looney, Jeremy McKeel, Amanda Mansfield, Kim Newbern, Tressa Ross, David Shelton, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Kristen Swisher, Lisa Willis, Casey Workman

Absent: Joshua Hutson, Matthew Jones, Audrey Neal, Justin Thomas, Joshua Tillson

Guests: Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources; Della Martin; Camela Ramey; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. David Wilson, Staff Regent

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

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:
Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs: Dr. Don Robertson reported on enrollment numbers. He gave an update on the recapture campaign for students eligible to return but not yet registered for the fall semester. Dr. Robertson listed dates for upcoming events. Racer Nation Orientations are scheduled for April 18 and April 19. The Senior Breakfast will be held April 23. All-Campus Sing is scheduled for April 30, at 4:30 p.m. The Budget Town Hall will be held April 30, 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources: Courtney Hixon said the 2025-2026 Holiday and University Planned Closure Calendar has been published on the Human Resources website and will be included in Racer Nation. She said that the lunch break walking group for April that was requested by Staff Congress has been well received. The walking group will continue to meet for the remaining Wednesdays in April, with check-in available from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Ms. Hixon provided dates for upcoming Lunch and Learn sessions and information about upcoming administrative support training and supervisor training. Registration links are available on the Human Resources website. Information regarding supervisor training will be sent to supervisors.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson said the Budget Advisory Committee will meet on April 28. Commencement is scheduled for May 10. The first quarter of the Wellness Pledge ends on May 31. The Board of Regents will meet June 6. Dr. Wilson plans to visit staff in their offices during the summer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Dedrick Brooks made a motion to approve the March 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Mary Steely seconded. Vice President McKeel called for the vote. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Tressa Ross presented the March 2025 Treasurer's Report. Trish Lofton made a motion to approve the March 2025 Treasurer's Report. Tami Dandeneau seconded. Vice President McKeel called for the question. The motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Executive Committee: Jeremy McKeel reported that at the April meeting of the Staff Congress Executive Committee, the committee discussed the portion of the Staff Survey related to Staff Congress. The committee developed initiatives in response to those survey responses and comments.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon read the names of the candidates who have filed to run for Staff Congress. The Staff Congress Election is scheduled for April 22-23.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: Tressa Ross thanked Staff Congress members for presenting Racer Spirit Award certificates to recipients and taking pictures of the presentations to post on Staff Congress social media. She read the names of additional Racer Spirt Award recipients and asked Staff Congress members to present those to the recipients. The Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee would like to simplify the nomination process for the Staff Excellence Award.

Communications Committee: Jeremy McKeel reported that at its recent meeting, the Communications Committee discussed on-going efforts to communicate with staff.

Working Conditions Committee: B.J. Johnson said the Working Conditions Committee will meet to discuss information the committee members have gathered from peer universities concerning summer work schedules.

Staff Survey Committee: Dedrick Brook said the Staff Survey Committee is reviewing the Staff Survey responses and will prepare a report and recommendations from the responses.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Vice President McKeel read the Textbook Scholarship Committee report on behalf of Joshua Hutson who was unable to attend today's Staff Congress meeting. The application deadlines for the textbook scholarship and the professional development fund have been updated to align with each other and with the university schedule. A link to donate to the professional development fund has been created. A process for direct deposit to donate to the development fund has also been established. The donation links were emailed to staff on April 16. The professional development fund recipient has one remaining payment to make to the event she will be attending before she can submit her payment receipts to receive the disbursement from the professional development fund.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: Trish Lofton relayed information from the Work-Life Balance subcommittee of the University-wide Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee. At its recent meeting, the Insurance and Benefits committee was informed that response to proposed changes to the callback policy has been tabled until the new university president begins his term at Murray State.

Tressa Ross said the callback policy is one of the items the Staff Congress Executive Committee plans to discuss with the new university president.

Orville Herndon provided an overview of the current callback policy and the proposed update.

Ms. Lofton said the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee developed the proposed update to the university callback policy based on the callback policies of peer universities.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee: Amanda Mansfield reported that at the April meeting of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, the committee discussed Kentucky House Bill 4 and possible implications for using the term DEI. The committee discussed possible names for the committee, if a name change is required. The committee will continue monitoring pending legislation.

Ms. Mansfield listed possible sessions for the Staff Success Week being planned for May.

Tressa Ross suggested Staff Success Week could include a session for parents of first-generation college students. The session could present information related to the FAFSA form and guidance regarding scholarships and university procedures for students.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon reported on the April meeting of the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee. Medical expenditures have decreased. He gave an overview of the university's stop-loss policy. The Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet on May 2, at 8:15 a.m., on Zoom. The committee will discuss work-life balance, childcare, and parking. At one of the upcoming committee meetings, Marsh McLennan, the university's health and wellness consultant, will present information to be used in 2026 health insurance discussions.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council: No report.

Naming Campus Facilities Committee: No report.

Judicial Board: No report.

Sick Leave Appeals Committee: No report.

International Studies Advisory Committee: No report.

Budget Advisory Committee: Jeremy McKeel said the Budget Advisory Committee met in March. The next meeting will be held on April 28. The Budget Town Hall meeting is scheduled for April 30.

Tressa Ross said that budget priorities include a cost-of-living adjustment and funding for the second year of adjustments resulting from the compensation study. Other items for the budget include funding the last year of scholarship increases, ongoing construction, and deferred maintenance. The university is waiting for the CPE's decision regarding tuition increases. The employee cost for 2026 insurance will increase as part of the plan to distribute the price increase across three years instead of implementing the entire increase in one year. The increase is part of the plan that moves the university closer to 80/20 employer/employee cost-sharing.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee: Duane Dycus reported that the Parking Advisory Committee will meet on April 23. The meeting agenda includes presentation of years of service parking permit discount information from the Staff Congress Parking Benefit Committee; electric vehicle charging stations; parking fee structures; ticketing fees; communicating parking changes; and blocking of staff, handicap, and visitor parking at the upper lot of the stadium the night before basketball games, although the spaces are needed by staff and visitors to the Housing Office located in the stadium.

Dedrick Brooks asked that the Parking Advisory Committee discuss paving the gravel parking located south of the Nash House.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

Business List Revision Committee: No report.

Tami Dandeneau asked for a copy of the Business Discount List so that Staff Congress members contacting businesses to ask about offering a discount to staff and faculty will know which businesses currently offer a discount to university staff and faculty.

Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: No report.

Parking Benefit Committee: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

INFORMATION ITEMS:
Gerry Harris listed dates and descriptions of events scheduled at or co-sponsored by the Hancock Biological Station from April 17 through May 3. She said information on the events is available on the Hancock Biological Station website.

Trish Lofton said the Racer Helping Racers Food Pantry for students is located in room 244 of the Blackburn Science Building. The pantry is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.; Thursday, 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. In the summer, the food pantry is open Monday and Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Students can also use the online form to schedule curbside service.

Amanda Mansfield said Career Services has moved to the Business Building, room 351.

Vice President McKeel said the next Staff Congress meeting is scheduled for May 21.

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