MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Minutes for August 20, 2025—Approved by Staff Congress September 17, 2025
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Ken Ashlock, Dedrick Brooks, Hannah Durbin, Duane Dycus, Jodi Hanneman, Gerry Harris, Abby Hensley, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, BJ Johnson, Trish Lofton, Jeremy McKeel, Audrey Neal, Kim Newbern, Tressa Ross, David Shelton, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Kristen Swisher, Justin Thomas, Joshua Tillson, Jenni Todd, Karami Underwood, Brian Williams, Casey Workman

Absent: David Looney, Carlos Lopez, Lisa Willis

Guests: Michael Bordieri, Faculty Senate President; Michael Busby, Faculty Senate Member; Courtney Hixon, Human Resources Director; Sharion Meloan; Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President; Camela Ramey; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. David Wilson, Staff 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: Dr. Ron Patterson said the Upward Bound Math and Science Program received a non-continuation letter for grant funding. In response, Dr. Patterson and Dr. Don Robertson are writing a letter of appeal and have contacted a Kentucky congressman for assistance.

Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs: Dr. Don Robertson thanked staff for assisting students with moving in to the residential halls and for helping with Great Beginnings. He said the university continues to receive positive comments about the friendliness of the campus. Dr. Robertson reported on sorority recruitment and university enrollment and retention numbers. The Interfraternity Council recruitment process will start on August 22. The Student Organization Fair was held today on the walkway between Carr Hall and the Oakley Applied Science Building. Approximately 40 student organizations provide opportunities for student involvement. WKMS will broadcast a program highlighting Murray State's student recruitment efforts. Dr. Robertson thanked staff for their work that contributes to student recruitment and retention.

Courtney Hixon, Human Resources Director: Courtney Hixon said the September 11 Lunch and Learn session will focus on the wellness vendor Sonic Boom. The Health and Benefits Fair is scheduled for October 23. Flu shots will be available at the health fair. More information about the health fair will be distributed at a later date.

A question was asked whether or not a drive-through flu shot clinic will be available.

Ms. Hixon said that a drive-through flu shot event would not be scheduled due to declining participation at the previous drive-through flu shot clinics.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson said the Board of Regents Retreat will be held on August 28. The Board of Regents Meeting is scheduled for August 29. Staff Congress officers will present the 2024-2025 Staff Survey information at the Board of Regents Retreat. The retreat and meeting will be live-streamed. Dr. Wilson will send staff a synopsis of the retreat and meeting. He thanked staff for driving shuttle busses and helping with Great Beginnings.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

July 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes: Abby Hensley made a motion to approve the July Meeting Minutes as presented. Kristen Swisher seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. There was none. President Neal called for the vote, and the motion carried.

August 8, 2025 Retreat Minutes: Tressa Ross made a motion to approve the August 8, 2025 Retreat Minutes as presented. Justin Thomas seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT: The approval of the July 2025 Treasurer's Report was tabled until the September Staff Congress meeting. The new Treasurer is waiting for access to Banner to retrieve the Staff Congress July Treasurer's Report.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee: President Neal reported on the August Executive Committee meeting. The officers discussed preparations for the presentation of the 2024-2025 Staff Survey to be made at the August 28 Board of Regents Retreat. Staff Survey Committee Chair Dedrick Brooks has prepared a condensed presentation of the survey results. The committee discussed the possibility of using Google spaces, chat, and calendars for Staff Congress. The committee meets the Wednesday prior to the Staff Congress meeting. Staff Congress members may contact Ms. Neal with items they would like the Executive Committee to discuss. Beginning in September, Staff Congress committee chairs will be invited to attend the Executive Committee meetings.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon said Samantha Matuszak resigned from Staff Congress due to scheduling conflicts. Josh Hutson has resigned from Staff Congress. Mr. Herndon has contacted recipients of write-in votes in the April 2025 Staff Congress Election to ask if they will fill vacancies on Staff Congress.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: Kim Newbern reported that the Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee will meet to discuss goals for the 2025-2026 year. She will send communication to Staff Congress about the September 30 deadline for Staff Excellence Award nominations. The committee has received nominations for the Racer Spirit Award. The Racer Spirit Award certificates will be distributed at the end of today's Staff Congress meeting so that Staff Congress members may present the awards to the recipients.

Tressa Ross asked about the formation of the Staff Excellence Award selection committee which chooses award recipients from the nominations received.

President Neal said that Staff Congress will focus on the award selection process after the September 30 deadline for this year's award.

Discussion followed concerning the Staff Excellence Award amount which initially followed the person who received the award and stayed on the person's base pay if the person changed positions at the university. The award has changed and the amount now remains with the position the person held when the award was received.

President Neal read the Staff Excellence Award selection committee information posted on the Staff Congress website.

Human Resources Director Courtney Hixon said the Staff Excellence Award selection committee is coordinated through the Office of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services. Human Resources receives the nominations and forwards them to the Office of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services to share with the award selection committee.

President Neal said the Staff Excellence Award categories still correspond to the representation groups that were previously used for Staff Congress. The Staff Excellence Award categories will need to be updated to correspond with the current Staff Congress representation groups that were approved by the Board of Regents.

Communications Committee: Jeremy McKeel reported that the Communications Committee is publishing the photos and brief biographies of Staff Congress members on Staff Congress social media to introduce the members to the university community. He asked that members who have not submitted their biographies and photos please forward those to the Committee.

Working Conditions Committee: No report.

Staff Survey Committee: Dedrick Brooks said the Staff Survey Committee will meet to begin preparing the 2025-2026 Staff Survey.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Karami Underwood said the information about the deadlines for the textbook scholarship and professional development fund applications has been forwarded to President Neal who will forward the information to Staff Congress members to send to their constituents. The applications are due September 1. The Textbook Scholarship Committee will promote the textbook scholarship and the professional development fund through Staff Congress social media and Racer Nation.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: Trish Lofton reported that an email was sent to Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee members with a Doodle Poll link to set a committee meeting date for the week of the August 25. The committee will discuss the goals that were developed at the Staff Congress Retreat and possible committee projects for the 2025-2026 year.

Community Involvement and Access Committee: Kristen Swisher said the Community Involvement and Access Committee plans to meet before the September Staff Congress meeting. The committee will discuss the goals from the Staff Congress Retreat. The committee will also discuss how often to schedule a Staff Success Week, as well as types of sessions to schedule and feedback from previous Staff Success Week sessions.

Trish Lofton said she has heard positive comments about Staff Success Week. Staff have also expressed appreciation that recordings of the Staff Success Week presentations are available.

President Neal added that the Staff Success Week recordings are on the Staff Congress website. She encouraged Staff Congress representatives to email the Staff Congress website link to their constituents with a note that the website contains links to Staff Congress social media, Staff Success Week session recordings, and the Comments, Concerns, and Suggestions form.

Trish Lofton said a digital business card template has been created in Canva for Staff Congress members to include in their emails to constituents.

President Neal said the link to the business card template has been emailed to Staff Congress representatives.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon reported that the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee meeting scheduled for August 29 will be rescheduled because the Board of Regents quarterly meeting is scheduled for August 29. The committee plans to discuss information regarding the 2026 health plan when the information becomes available from Marsh McLennan, the university's health insurance consultant. Employee costs for 2026 insurance will increase as part of the plan to move the university closer to 80/20 employer/employee cost-sharing.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council: No report.

Naming Campus Facilities Committee: Dedrick Brooks said the Naming Campus Facilities Committee has discussed two naming proposals. The details cannot be released until the naming proposals are approved by the Board of Regents.

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 has not received information about when meetings will be held during the 2025-2026 year.

Dr. Patterson said that, currently, university administration is focusing on the search for a Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services. An agreement has been signed with a search consultant and the search committee is being formalized. As the search process progresses, Dr. Patterson anticipates attending to the Budget Advisory Committee.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee and Staff Congress Ad Hoc Parking Benefit Committee Combined Report:
Duane Dycus reported that the members of the Parking Advisory Committee are working to set a meeting date for the fall semester.

The ad hoc Parking Benefit Committee has drafted a statement to request the lowering of the years of service required to receive the free parking benefit and to set tiered parking fees based on years of service. The statement has been forwarded to President Neal for review. The statement will be presented to Staff Congress for approval. If the statement is approved by Staff Congress, it will be presented to Faculty Senate to discuss the possibility of presenting a joint resolution from Staff Congress and Faculty Senate.

Mr. Dycus said he has received requests that the small parking lot behind the Industry and Technology Building be changed from a red and blue zone to blue only.

Ms. Neal added that the parking lot known as the "shark tank" behind the Applied Science Building has been re-opened to parking.

Regarding a request to pave the parking lots south of the Nash House, Mr. Dycus reported that at the spring meeting of the Parking Advisory Committee, paving those lots was included in a list of items that Parking Services plans to accomplish.

Mary Steely said she has been asked to request that the number of visitor parking spaces in front of the Lowry Center be reduced. Because the Admissions and Transfer Center is no longer located in the Lowry Center, fewer visitor spaces are needed in that area. For that reason, staff have requested that some of the visitor parking spaces in front of the building be changed to blue zone parking.

Affirmative Action Committee: No report.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:
Business List Revision Committee: President Neal will update the Business Discount List in Google Docs so that Business List Committee Chair Jodi Hanneman will be able to update the list.

Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
Staff Congress 2025-2026 Goals and Objectives: President Neal distributed copies of the working draft of the Staff Congress 2025-2026 Goals and Objectives compiled from discussion at the Staff Congress Retreat on August 8. The document was also emailed to all Staff Congress members prior to today's Staff Congress meeting. President Neal asked for comments on the document and due dates for goals.

Discussion followed.

President Neal will add the notes from today's discussion to the document. The document will be presented for approval at the September Staff Congress meeting.

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.

Racer Spirit Awards were distributed to Staff Congress members to present to staff nominees.