MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Minutes for June 18, 2025—Approved by Staff Congress July 16, 2025
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Dedrick Brooks, Duane Dycus, Jodi Hanneman, Gerry Harris, Abby Hensley, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, Joshua Hutson, BJ Johnson, Trish Lofton, David Looney, Jeremy McKeel, Amanda Mansfield, Samantha Matuszak, Audrey Neal, Kim Newbern, Tressa Ross, Mary Steely, Kristen Swisher, Justin Thomas, Joshua Tillson, Karami Underwood, Brian Williams, Lisa Willis, Casey Workman

Absent: Tami Dandeneau, Matthew Jones, David Shelton, Rachel Stewart, Jenni Todd

Guests: Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources; Carlos Lopez, Staff Congress Member-Elect; Dr. David Wilson, Staff Regent

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

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:
Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources: Courtney Hixon listed dates for upcoming Racer Wellness events. The lunch walking group will meet on Wednesdays in July. Check-in will be at the MSU gate from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. A watermelon social for staff is scheduled for July 23, at the Waterfield Library Breezeway. Staff may attend anytime between 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. Upcoming Lunch and Learn sessions will be hosted by Human Resources Benefits staff. On August 6, the topic will be retirement. At the September 11 session, wellness resources will be discussed, including information about the new wellness vendor platform that will be implemented in the fall.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson summarized the June Board of Regents meeting report that he will send to Staff Congress. At the Board of Regents meeting, University President Dr. Robert Jackson was recognized for his service to the university. Board Chair Leon Owens, Faculty Regent Dr. Melony Shemberger, and Student Regent Brendan Hawkins will have completed their terms on the Board at the end of June. Dr. Robbie Fitch was elected chair. Dr. David Meinschein was elected Vice-Chair. Board of Regents meeting dates for the 2025-2026 year were set. The Board of Regents retreat is scheduled for August 28, and a meeting is scheduled for August 29.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Joshua Hutson made a motion to approve the May 2025 Meeting Minutes as presented. Kim Newbern seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. There was none. She called for the vote. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT: Trish Lofton made a motion to approve the May 2025 Treasurer's Report. Joshua Hutson seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Executive Committee: President Neal reported on the Executive Committee's June meeting with incoming University President Dr. Ron Patterson, on Zoom. The committee answered Dr. Patterson's questions regarding the structure and meeting schedule of Staff Congress. He also asked what issues are most important to staff at this time. President Neal will send those responses to Staff Congress. Dr. Patterson said he will attend Staff Congress meetings as often as the group would like him to attend.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon made a motion to appoint Samantha Matuszak to fill the remainder of a vacant position that expires June 30, 2025. As a write-in candidate in the April 2025 Staff Congress election, Ms. Matuszak will serve a three-year term beginning July 1, 2025. Joshua Hutson seconded the motion. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

Mr. Herndon introduced Carlos Lopez. Mr. Lopez was elected to Staff Congress as a write-in candidate in the April 2025 Staff Congress Election. His three-year term will begin July 1, 2025.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: President Neal gave the Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee report on behalf of Tressa Ross who was unable to attend the first portion of the Staff Congress meeting due to working with Racer Nation Orientation. The committee is working with Sharion Meloan, in the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services, to plan the Staff Breakfast. The committee hopes to schedule the breakfast on a date when Dr. Patterson will be able to attend.

Communications Committee: Jeremy McKeel said the Communications Committee plans to have a group photo of Staff Congress taken on July 16, at 1:25 p.m., before the Staff Congress meeting that begins at 1:30 p.m., that day. Staff Congress members who would like a headshot taken can arrive before the group photo is taken. The headshots will be included in the social media posts to introduce Staff Congress members. The committee will prepare a Google form Staff Congress representatives can use to submit their information for the social media posts.

Working Conditions Committee: BJ Johnson reported that the Working Conditions Committee is compiling the information received from peer universities concerning four-day summer work-week schedules.

Staff Survey Committee: Dedrick Brooks said the Staff Survey Committee has forwarded to the Staff Congress Executive Committee the recommendations from the 2024-2025 Staff Survey. President Neal distributed paper copies of the recommendations to those attending the meeting in-person. A link to the recommendations and full survey report will be emailed to Staff Congress representatives. At the July meeting, Staff Congress will vote on adopting the recommendations. The recommendations will be used to guide the work of the group for the 2025-2026 year. The committee will begin preparing the 2025-2026 Staff Survey.

President Neal read the recommendations aloud. She thanked the committee members for their work.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Joshua Hutson said the Professional Development Fund Scholarship in the amount of $250 has been awarded to Kaitlin Green. Ms. Green works with Upward Bound and will be applying the award toward a year-long leadership conference related to her job responsibilities. The Textbook Scholarship Committee will promote the Textbook Scholarship and the Professional Development Fund Scholarship to encourage applications for the fall semester.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: No report.

Community Involvement and Access Committee: Amanda Mansfield reported on the Staff Success Week that was held during the last week of May. She said the hybrid format of in-person sessions and online sessions worked well.

President Neal said she will forward to the Community Involvement and Access Committee the evaluation forms submitted by Staff Success Week participants. The committee will begin planning for the fall Staff Success Week.

Dedrick Brooks complimented the session with the supervisor panel.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon reported that the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee anticipates receiving insurance information in late July. He said for those who participate in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP), the Retirement Oversight Committee for University Sponsored Retirement Plans works with the ORP.

Staff Congress member David Looney, who is a member of the Retirement Oversight Committee, explained that the oversight committee strives to ensure that the options available to those who participate in the ORP are financially sensible.

Human Resources Director Courtney Hixon listed the names of the other members of the committee. Captrust, a retirement advisory services consultant, provides additional guidance for the committee.

Mr. Herndon said information about the Retirement Oversight Committee is available on the MSU website. Staff may also contact Mr. Herndon to request the link to the committee's website.

Mr. Herndon said the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet on August 29, at 8:15 a.m.

Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson said the Board of Regents is scheduled to meet on August 29.

Mr. Herndon responded that the Insurance and Benefit Committee meeting may be rescheduled.

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: Presented Neal said the university budget was approved at the June Board of Regents meeting.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee and Staff Congress Ad Hoc Parking Benefit Committee Combined Report:
Duane Dycus said the Parking Benefit Committee will write the request for the improvement in the parking benefit based on years-of-service. The proposal will be sent to the Faculty Senate for potential collaboration.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:
Business List Revision Committee: President Neal reported that the revision for the Business Discount List is in-progress.

Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: No report.

NEW BUSINESS:
Election of 2025-2026 Staff Congress Officers: Parliamentarian Orville Herndon read the names of Staff Congress members who filed as candidates for Staff Congress officer positions.

For the office of President, Dedrick Brooks and Audrey Neal filed as candidates prior to today's Staff Congress meeting. Mr. Herndon asked if there were any additional nominations for President. There were none.

For Vice President, Jeremy McKeel filed as a candidate prior to today's Staff Congress meeting. Mr. Herndon asked if there were any additional nominations for Vice President. There were none.

For Treasurer, BJ Johnson and Tressa Ross filed as candidates prior to today's Staff Congress meeting. Mr. Herndon asked if there were any additional nominations for Treasurer. There were none.

Mr. Herndon read the names of Staff Congress members attending via Zoom, to ensure those persons would receive an email with the link to the online ballot to vote anonymously. He appointed Trish Lofton and Dr. David Wilson to serve as election tellers. The tellers distributed paper ballots to those attending the Staff Congress meeting in-person. A link to the online ballot was emailed by Mr. Herndon to Staff Congress representatives attending via Zoom.

After the tellers tallied the votes, Mr. Herndon said the election for Treasurer resulted in a tie for BJ Johnson and Tressa Ross. Paper ballots were again distributed to those attending the meeting in-person and a link to the ballot was sent to those attending on Zoom.

After the votes from the run-off election were tallied, Orville Herndon announced the results of the officer election. For President, Dedrick Brooks received 6 votes and Audrey Neal received 16 votes. For Vice President, Jeremy McKeel received 12 votes. For Treasurer, in the run-off vote, BJ Johnson received 11 votes and Tressa Ross received 9 votes.

Justin Thomas made a motion to approve the results of the Staff Congress Officer Election. Trish Lofton seconded. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

Set Date for Staff Congress Retreat: President Neal presented tentative dates for the Staff Congress Retreat. Discussion followed. Ms. Neal will send a Doodle Poll to Staff Congress members to determine dates the members are available to attend the retreat.

INFORMATION ITEMS:
Trish Lofton said the Great Beginnings events for new students will start on August 13. Volunteers are needed to assist with the activities. She will send an email to staff in July asking for volunteers.

President Neal said she will email Staff Congress members so they can indicate their committee preferences for the 2025-2026 year. She will email the current committee chairs to request an update on the 2024-2025 goals completed and the goals in-progress.

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