MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Minutes for March 12, 2025—Approved by Staff Congress April 16, 2025
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Dedrick Brooks, Duane Dycus, Jodi Hanneman, Gerry Harris, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, Joshua Hutson, B.J. Johnson, Matthew Jones, David Looney, Jeremy McKeel, Audrey Neal, Tressa Ross, David Shelton, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Kristen Swisher, Justin Thomas, Joshua Tillson, Lisa Willis, Casey Workman

Absent: Tami Dandeneau, Trish Lofton, Amanda Mansfield, Kim Newbern

Guests: Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources; Sharion Meloan, Executive Coordinator, Office of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services; 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 of Human Resources, provided information about the Racer Wellness program for the second quarter of 2025. She discussed webinars available through Hinge Health and the Employee Assistance Program. Performance appraisals are due April 4. Supervisor training begins on March 12. The next administrative support training is scheduled for May 7, via Zoom. The link for the training is on the Human Resources website.

President Neal said Jordan Smith, Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs, is monitoring the legislative session for bills that would affect the university. Staff may email questions to Jordan Smith or to President Neal.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson said he emailed Dr. Ron K. Patterson, the incoming University President, to congratulate him on his appointment as President. Regent Wilson thanked staff for participating in the town hall meetings for the presidential candidates. The Budget Advisory Committee will meet on March 31. He thanked staff for their work that supports students toward graduation.

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

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Tressa Ross presented the January 2025 and February 2025 Treasurer's Reports. David Looney asked how the textbook scholarship is replenished. President Neal and Textbook Scholarship Committee Chair Joshua Hutson replied that the fund is replenished through rebate nights and donations made through voluntary payroll deduction.

Joshua Hutson made a motion to approve the January 2025 and February 2025 Treasurer's Reports. Justin Thomas 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 relayed compliments from the Faculty Senate regarding the Staff Congress listening sessions and Staff Congress' communication efforts with staff.

The Executive Committee was able to meet with each of the candidates for university President. The committee asked the candidates the questions received from staff. A transcript of the candidates' replies was emailed to staff. The town hall meetings with the presidential candidates were streamed live.

Notes from the Staff Congress listening sessions for staff were emailed to staff. Comments and feedback from staff who were unable to attend the listening sessions will also be emailed to staff.

President Neal reported on her conversation with Human Resources Director Courtney Hixon earlier today concerning remote work applications. All remote/flexible work applications received by the Human Resources office have been approved. Rejection or non-approval of applications is happening at levels other than Human Resources. Staff with questions regarding remote work should contact Human Resources.

Ms. Hixon added that the flexible/remote work application is for a long-term of at least a year. Short-term arrangements can be coordinated between employees and their supervisors.

President Neal discussed feedback regarding flexible/remote work from the staff listening sessions. She encouraged staff to contact Human Resources with questions concerning flexible/remote work.

The Staff Survey will close on March 14. President Neal reported on the listening session the Staff Congress Executive Officers held at Breathitt Veterinary Center.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon read the names of Staff Congress members whose terms will expire on June 30, 2025. He listed the Staff Congress representative categories with vacancies. On behalf of the Credentials and Elections Committee, Mr. Herndon made a motion to hold the Staff Congress Election April 22-23, with the nomination period to be held March 24 through April 7. The candidacy intent form will be available in a Google form. The election will be held online through VoteNet. Joshua Hutson seconded the motion. President Neal asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the question. The motion carried.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: Tressa Ross gave Racer Spirit Award certificates to Staff Congress members to present to the award recipients. Photos of the certificate presentations can be sent to Chair Ross or to Communications Committee Chair Jeremy McKeel to be posted on Staff Congress social media. Nominations for the Racer Spirit Award are accepted throughout the year. At the next staff event, the Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee plans to have a written nomination form or QR code available for the Racer Spirit Award.

Communications Committee: No report.

Working Conditions Committee: B.J. Johnson reported that the Working Conditions Committee is gathering information from peer universities concerning summer work schedules.

President Neal said summer hours is one of the topics she plans to discuss with the incoming University President. She said the Staff Congress Executive Officers asked each presidential candidate questions concerning summer work hours.

Staff Survey Committee: Dedrick Brooks said the Staff Survey deadline was extended to March 14. He asked Staff Congress members to remind staff to respond to the survey.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Joshua Hutson reported that Kaitlin Green was awarded a professional development scholarship in the amount of $250. The scholarship will be disbursed after Ms. Green has submitted a receipt for payment for the professional development event. No applications were received for the textbook scholarship for the spring semester. The Scholarship Committee members are contacting restaurants to request rebate nights for the textbook scholarship and the professional development fund.

Discussion followed regarding promoting and raising funds for the textbook scholarship and the professional development fund.

President Neal said she will prepare promotional information regarding the textbook scholarship and the professional development fund. She will send the information to Staff Congress representatives to forward to their constituents.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: No report.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee: Kristen Swisher said the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee decided to retain the committee's name unless legislation requires the name be changed. The committee will meet in April.

President Neal said the decision to retain the committee's name was made after discussion with Cami Duffy, Executive Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Coordinator, and Jordan Smith, Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon said the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet on April 4, at 8:15 a.m., on Zoom. The Work-Life Balance sub-committee has sent questions to Human Resources Director Courtney Hixon. Mr. Herndon asked that feedback concerning the 2025 insurance be sent to the committee. The committee will include the feedback in its discussions regarding 2026 insurance.

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: President Neal said that, as Staff Regent Dr. Wilson reported, the Budget Advisory Committee will meet on March 31. The university is waiting for the CPE's decision regarding tuition increases. She said priorities for the budget 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. Changes will be made to performance funding metrics.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee: No report.

Dedrick Brooks asked if announcements are made when changes are made to parking space designations for example, when spaces are changed from a blue permit to a visitor permit. The discussion that followed included concern that online parking maps are not always current and a request for announcements of changes to parking spaces. Regent Wilson added that staff, handicap, and visitor parking at the stadium where the Housing Office is located is blocked the night before basketball games. Staff who work in the Housing Office are then required to park in the lot at the bottom of the hill below the stadium when returning to work the next day. Some staff have difficulty walking from the lower stadium parking lot due to the uphill terrain. Visitors and maintenance staff who visit the Housing Office are also unable to use the upper parking lot when it is blocked. Also noted was that snow was plowed into the handicap parking spaces, making those spaces unavailable. Duane Dycus said he will present the issues to the Parking Advisory Committee.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

Parking Benefit Committee: Duane Dycus gave an overview of the information the Parking Benefit Committee members found when researching parking benefits offered to employees for years of service at peer universities.

Discussion followed. He plans to present the information to the University-wide Parking Advisory Committee for feedback. The Parking Advisory Committee will meet later during the spring semester.

Business List Revision Committee: No report.

President Neal said that a note has been added to the Business Discount List webpage stating that the list is being revised.

Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: No report.

President Neal asked if the changes to the Staff Congress representative categories have been posted in the Bylaws on the Staff Congress webpage and on the University Governance page. Orville Herndon replied that he will send the information to the Staff Congress Secretary to post on the Staff Congress page. President Neal said the information will also need to be updated on the University Governance page.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

INFORMATION ITEMS: President Neal distributed a flyer with information about Faculty and Staff Appreciation Day meals provided by Sodexo at Winslow Dining Hall on March 14.

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