MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Minutes for April 15, 2026—Approved by Staff Congress May 20, 2026
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Emily Asher, Ken Ashlock, Dedrick Brooks, Hannah Durbin, Duane Dycus, Gerry Harris, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, BJ Johnson, Kelsey Johnson, Bobby Koehler, Trish Lofton, David Looney, Jeremy McKeel, Tressa Ross, Amy Sanders, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Karami Underwood, Brian Williams, Lisa Willis, Casey Workman

Absent: Abby Hensley, Carlos Lopez, Audrey Neal, Kim Newbern, David Shelton, Kristen Swisher, Justin Thomas

Guests: Wendy Cain, Assistant Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services; Marcie Clark, Assistant Director of Benefits, Human Resources; Dr. Laura Foltz, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services; Camela Ramey; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs; Haley Stedelin, Associate Director of Human Resources; 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 provided a recruitment and enrollment update for the summer and fall 2026 semesters. All the Presidential Fellowships that were offered have been accepted. Dr. Robertson listed the following upcoming events: April 18--All-Campus Sing; April 21--Honors Orientation; April 22--Senior Breakfast. On April 23, the Murray State Speech and Debate Union will participate in the Provost Premiere Showcase. The university's debate team has won a national debate tournament for two consecutive years. The Office of Student Enrichment, Academic Excellence, and Leadership will present The Academic Excellence and Leadership Awards on April 24.

Dr. Laura Foltz, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services: Dr. Laura Foltz said a town hall is scheduled for April 22. At the town hall, Captrust will present information on improvements to ORP and 403b retirement plans. The Budget Town Hall is scheduled for April 28, at Wrather Auditorium. Dr. Foltz asked for feedback regarding the recent change to Procurement limits.

Tressa Ross asked how individuals may submit concerns or requests for changes.

Dr. Foltz said the information may be submitted to her or to Sharion Meloan in the office of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services. Other processes are being evaluated for efficiency improvements, including changing some paper processes to electronic forms. Dr. Foltz thanked staff for their work.

Haley Stedelin, Associate Director of Human Resources: Haley Stedelin said an email was sent to employees on April 15, with information about the town hall scheduled for April 22. The town hall will be streamed online.

The walking group, which counts as a Wellness Pledge activity, will continue on Wednesdays in April. During today's Lunch and Learn, Hinge Health discussed menopause. On May 13, a gardening activity will be held at the Arboretum. A link to register for the event will be sent to employees. The search process for job openings is being evaluated for changes to increase efficiency. More information will be distributed. Employees with questions may contact Human Resources.

Marcie Clark, Assistant Director of Benefits, Human Resources: Marcie Clark said the changes to the ORP and 403b retirement plans that will be discussed at the April 22 town hall will be effective October 1. An article with information about the changes will be on the Knowledge Base. Employees with questions may contact Human Resources.

Staff Regent Report: Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson complimented the Presidential Investiture Committee. He complimented Staff Congress President Audrey Neal and others who spoke at the investiture ceremony. Dr. Patterson and Jenny Patterson have started a scholarship for first generation students. The ground-breaking for the Veterinary Sciences Building will be held on April 22, at the Murray State West Farm. A Summer Orientation is scheduled for April 25. The Budget Advisory Committee will meet on April 27. On May 3, the Almost Midnight Breakfast will be held in Winslow. Graduation is scheduled for May 8 and 9. Dr. Wilson thanked staff for their work that contributes to the graduation of students. The Board of Regents will meet on June 12.

Dedrick Brooks thanked Dr. Wilson for his remarks on behalf of staff at the Board of Regents meeting on April 3. Other Staff Congress members thanked Dr. Wilson for his remarks at the Board of Regents meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Dedrick Brooks made a motion to approve the March 25, 2026 Staff Congress Meeting Minutes. Tressa Ross seconded. Vice 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 February 2026 and March 2026 Treasurer's Reports: Treasurer BJ Johnson said the spring semester textbook scholarship was issued to the recipient.

Trish Lofton made a motion to approve the February 2026 and March 2026 Treasurer's Reports. The motion was seconded. Vice President McKeel asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he called for vote. The motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Executive Committee: Vice President McKeel said he will ask for a motion to form an ad hoc committee during New Business in today's Staff Congress meeting.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon read the names of the staff members who have filed to run in the Staff Congress Election. The election will be held on April 21 and 22, on myGate.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: No report.

Communications Committee: No report.

Working Conditions Committee: No report.

Staff Survey Committee: No report.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: No report.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: Trish Lofton reported that the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee met to discuss the next steps in submitting a resolution to the Board of Regents concerning tuition waivers. The committee will prepare a brief survey to ask staff if they use the tuition waivers for themselves or their dependents, and if so, what impact do the tuition waivers have for them. The responses will be helpful in preparing a resolution concerning tuition waivers.

Community Involvement and Access Committee: Vice President McKeel read the committee report from President Neal who is traveling for work. The Community Involvement and Access Committee and the Communications

Committee have begun promoting the Staff Success Week scheduled for May. Information will be sent to *Racer Nation Information*, posted on Staff Congress social media, and added to the university calendar. The information will be sent to Staff Congress representatives to forward to their constituents.

Staff Congress members discussed ideas for increasing awareness among employees that a link exists at the bottom of the *Racer Nation Information* email. The link allows readers to view the entire newsletter which is truncated in the email due to size limitations. Discussion noted that readers may not be aware of the information contained in the newsletter link. Vice President McKeel said he will send an email to Shawn Touney, Executive Director of Marketing and Communication, regarding the truncated newsletter. Staff Congress members discussed requesting the newsletter also be posted in myGate.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:
Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon reported that the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet on April 17, at 9:30 a.m. The topic for the meeting will be wellness benefits. The committee will determine a meeting schedule for the summer.

Trish Lofton said tuition waivers will be discussed at the committee's April 17 meeting.

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: Vice President McKeel said the Budget Advisory Committee will meet on April 27. The Budget Town Hall is scheduled for April 28.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee: Duane Dycus said the Parking Advisory Committee will meet on May 1. Topics for the meeting may be submitted to Mr. Dycus.

Mr. Dycus asked if the Executive Committee has received a response concerning the *Resolution for Parking Benefits for Years of Service* that was approved at the September 17, 2025 Staff Congress meeting.

Vice President McKeel said the Executive Committee has not received a response for the resolution. The Executive Committee will check the status of the resolution.

Affirmative Action Committee: No report.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:
Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: Orville Herndon reported that when the Kentucky Legislature session closes, the committee will know if any changes have been made to the Staff Regent statute.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
BJ Johnson asked if the *Staff Congress Resolution in Support of Tuition Waiver Policy Revision* that was approved at the January 21, 2026 Staff Congress meeting has been approved by the university administration.

Staff Regent Dr. Wilson said the resolution has not been presented to the Board of Regents.

Vice President McKeel will ask President Neal to request follow-up on the resolution.

NEW BUSINESS:
BJ Johnson asked about providing resources for staff experiencing food insecurity.

David Looney said the Racers Helping Racers Food Pantry is available for staff. He is discussing with Re'Nita Avery, Director of Student Life, and Sodexo the possibility of providing meals at Winslow for employees and students with food insecurity. Need Line provides assistance to residents of Calloway County. A request was made to discuss at a future Staff Congress meeting suggestions for assisting employees with food insecurity or to develop an ad hoc committee to address the issue.

Vice President McKeel said the topic can be discussed further at a future Staff Congress meeting.

Mr. McKeel said that after discussion with Murray State President Dr. Patterson, Staff Congress President Neal and the Executive Committee are recommending the formation of an ad hoc committee to communicate with peer institutions and to explore initiatives to better support staff at extended campus locations. President Neal will chair the committee. Members will include Mary Steely, Gerry Harris, and Hannah Durbin. Dedrick Brooks seconded the motion. Mr. McKeel asked if there was any discussion.

Orville Herndon asked if the Staff Congress representative from Breathitt Veterinary Center could be appointed to the committee.

Mr. McKeel agreed that the representative from Breathitt can serve on the committee. Mr. McKeel called for the vote. The motion carried.

INFORMATION ITEMS:
BJ Johnson distributed flyers with information about the Earth Day Celebration scheduled for April 22.

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