MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Minutes for May 20, 2026—Approved by Staff Congress June 17, 2026
Wells Hall, Room 118, and Zoom

Present: Emily Asher, Ken Ashlock, Dedrick Brooks, Hannah Durbin, Duane Dycus, Abby Hensley, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, BJ Johnson, Bobby Koehler, Trish Lofton, David Looney, Jeremy McKeel, Audrey Neal, Tressa Ross, Amy Sanders, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Brandon Story, Karami Underwood, Brian Williams, Casey Workman

Absent: Gerry Harris, Kelsey Johnson, Carlos Lopez, Kim Newbern, David Shelton, Kristen Swisher, Justin Thomas, Lisa Willis

Guests: Wendy Cain, Assistant Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services; Dr. Renee Fister, Associate Provost; Dr. Laura Foltz, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services; Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President; Camela Ramey; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs; Haley Stedelin, Associate Director of Human Resources; Joe Tucker; Gary ZeRuth, Faculty Regent

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

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:

Dr. Ron K. Patterson, University President: Dr. Ron Patterson thanked staff for their work He provided an update on the construction of the new nursing building. He, Dr. Don Robertson, and Dr. Roslyn White will be traveling to meet with representatives from the EAB, and then to China to attend the graduation ceremony for students graduating with a degree through the partnership between Murray State and Shandong Technology and Business University. Dr. Patterson provided an update on federal funding proposals for the university. He thanked Staff Congress members for serving on university committees.

Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President of Student Affairs: Dr. Don Robertson presented enrollment numbers for the summer and fall 2026 semesters, and Racer Nation Orientation sessions. Staff in Student Affairs and other university offices are contacting students who are eligible to return for classes in the fall but have not yet registered for classes. Dr. Robertson thanked staff for their work.

Dr. Laura Foltz, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services: Dr. Laura Foltz staff thanked for their patience during the planned electrical maintenance outage. Dr. Foltz explained a potential adjustment to the dollar amount of items listed in the inventory process. The adjustment will be discussed at an upcoming Board of Regents meeting. Dr. Foltz and the staff in the office of Finance and Administrative Services continue to evaluate processes that can be changed from paper to electronic forms. She thanked staff for their work.

Dr. Renee Fister, Associate Provost, Vice President Academic Affairs: Dr. Renee Fister discussed the *Faculty/Staff Degree Agreements Draft*. The Faculty/Staff Agreements Committee will meet during the summer to discuss the document. Dr. Fister thanked Dr. Patterson for bringing forward the idea for the agreement. She answered questions. Additional input and questions may be given to Staff Congress Representative Tressa Ross who serves on the committee.

Dr. Fister said Dr. Twigg will begin as Provost on June 1. Dr. Twigg will speak at Racer Nation Orientation.

Dr. Patterson provided background for the development of the *Faculty/Staff Degree Agreements Draft*.

President Neal expressed appreciation for allowing staff to provide input on the *Faculty/Staff Degree Agreements Draft*.

Haley Stedelin, Associate Director of Human Resources: Haley Stedelin explained time reporting for staff during the planned electrical outage that occurred on May 18 and 19. Ms. Stedelin answered questions concerning time reporting during the outage. Staff may contact Human Resources with questions regarding time reporting. Phase 1 of Racer Wellness ends May 31. Questions regarding Racer Wellness can be sent to Lauren Smee or to the Racer Wellness email address. Ms. Stedelin reported on the gardening Lunch and Learn held on May 13.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mary Steely made a motion to approve the April 15, 2026 Meeting Minutes as presented. Jeremy McKeel seconded. President Neal if there was any discussion or corrections. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT:
Approval of April 2026 Treasurer's Reports: Tressa Ross made a motion to approve the April 2026 Treasurer's Report. Trish Lofton 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 that at the May Executive Committee meeting, the committee discussed the Staff Survey results. Dedrick Brooks will provide a report on the Staff Survey results later in today's Staff Congress meeting. The committee discussed the *Faculty/Staff Degree Agreements Draft* and the *Gender Equity Caucus Resolution* that will be discussed later in today's meeting during New Business.

The Staff Congress Grievance Committee met to hear a grievance. The committee followed the Grievance Committee procedures developed by Staff Congress.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon made a motion to appoint Brandon Story to complete the remainder of Jenni Todd's term on Staff Congress. Mary Steely seconded. The motion carried.

Mr. Herndon read the names of newly elected Staff Congress members whose terms will begin in July: Jillian Smith, Taylor Snell, Julianne McClain, and Meagan Brawner. He reported on the percentage of staff who voted in the April 2026 Staff Congress Election and in previous elections.

Staff Congress will vote to elect officers at the June Staff Congress meeting. Mr. Herndon explained the eligibility requirements to run for an officer position.

President Neal requested that a Google form for the officer election be available for Staff Congress members who will attend the June meeting online.

Mr. Herndon said Staff Congress will set the Staff Congress meetings and elections for the next academic year after the dates for Racer Nation Orientation and Racer Days have been published to avoid scheduling Staff Congress meetings on the same dates as those events.

President Neal said that Staff Congress previously discussed holding the Staff Congress meeting at the regularly July meeting instead of scheduling the retreat separately. Ms. Neal asked for the Staff Congress members' preference for scheduling the retreat. The group consensus was to hold the retreat during the July meeting.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: No report.

President Neal said she will ask Committee Chair Kim Newbern, who is out of the office for vacation this week, if the date for the Staff Breakfast has been set.

Communications Committee: No report.

President Neal asked Staff Congress members to send news of staff accomplishments to Jeremy McKeel who will post the items on Staff Congress social media.

Working Conditions Committee: No report.

Staff Survey Committee: Dedrick Brooks said the Staff Survey Results were given to President Neal and to the Staff Survey Committee to review. The committee will prepare recommendations based on the survey results. The recommendations will be given to the Staff Congress Executive Committee to present at the Board of Regents Retreat.

President Neal said the Staff Survey Results and Recommendations will also be sent to Staff Congress representatives.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Karami Underwood reported that the Textbook Scholarship Committee would like to raise funds in order to award additional scholarships. She asked Staff Congress members to send her ideas for fundraising.

Discussion of fundraising suggestions included payroll deduction which is available for employees. Haley Stedelin provided information on payroll deductions.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: Trish Lofton said she and Staff Survey Committee Chair Dedrick Brooks are going to prepare a mini-survey regarding tuition waivers.

Community Involvement and Access Committee: Hannah Durbin reported on the Staff Success Week sessions held and feedback received from the sessions.

President Neal thanked the Community Involvement and Access Committee members for their work to organize Staff Success Week. Recordings of sessions will be posted on the Staff Congress website. Recordings of previous Staff Success Week sessions are on the website.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:
Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon reported on the May 14 meeting of the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee. Mr. Herndon, Dr. Foltz, and Ms. Stedelin explained changes to the 2027 insurance. A change in the minimum deductible for the highest deductible plan has been mandated by the federal government.

Dr. Foltz said that insurance premium increases will not be passed to employees.

Staff Congress thanked Dr. Foltz and Dr. Patterson for maintaining premium rates for employees.

The committee's organizational meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 28, at 8:30 a.m. At the meeting, a chair and secretary will be selected.

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 reported that the Budget Advisory Committee included a presentation of information that was later presented at the Budget Town Hall. The committee plans to meet during the summer.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee: Duane Dycus said the Parking Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for May was cancelled due to the lack of agenda items.

Mr. Dycus asked for feedback regarding parking for the spring commencement ceremonies that were held at Racer Arena. Staff Congress members who attended the ceremonies reported positive experiences with parking for that event.

Affirmative Action Committee: No report.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:
Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: Orville Herndon said the Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee is waiting for updates to the KRS website to determine if any changes have been made to the KRS statute concerning Staff Regents. The Staff Regent Election in March 2027 will be affected by any changes to the statute.

Extended Campus Committee: President Neal said the Extended Campus Committee has not yet met.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:
Gender Equity Caucus Resolution: President Neal provided an overview of the Faculty Senate Gender Equity Caucus Resolution draft. The resolution recommends that employees on sick leave not be charged for sick leave during unplanned campus closures. President Neal asked if the Staff Congress members want Staff Congress to sign the draft resolution or draft a resolution from Staff Congress that also addresses vacation time during unplanned campus closures.

Discussion followed.

Based on the discussion that followed, President Neal presented the following options: 1)Forward the resolution draft to the Policy Review Committee to research the questions brought by Staff Congress during the discussion; 2) Prepare a resolution from Staff Congress. In a vote by show of hands, Staff Congress members choose to forward the resolution draft to the Policy Review Committee.

Questions and concerns about the resolution may be sent to Staff Congress member Trish Lofton who serves on the Policy Review Committee.

INFORMATION ITEMS:
Dedrick Brooks congratulated Staff Congress members who completed degrees this semester.

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