Operating Staff Council  
HSC - Skyroom  
Minutes – May 1, 2014

Present: Stacey Bivens, Elizabeth Buck, Donald Butler, Heike Hofstetter, Patricia Liberty-Baczek, David Long, Yvette Lubbers, Jay Monteiro, Rachel Pierce, Amy Polzin, Carlos Raices, Pam Roesner, Gina Shannon, Andy Small, Karen Smith

Absent (excused): Nikkita Carrington

Guests: Robin Andersen, Deborah Haliczer, Sara Klaper, Vice President for Operations & Community Relations Bill Nicklas, Andy Peccarelli, Rahul Thatte, Rhonda Wybourn

From Housing & Dining: Suzanne Sedlacek, Ken Whitney
From Building Services: Nancy Brown, Sue Burston, Phyllis Livingston, Kim McCaslin, Carolyn Van Etten, Mary Whalen

Dependent Scholarship Award Winners: Brittney Bonebright & her mother Sandra Bonebright, Jacqueline Lorusso and her mother Valerie Lorusso

I. Call to Order
President Andy Small called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:15 AM.

II. Roll Call
Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

III. Approval of Agenda
A motion was made by Amy Polzin to accept the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Heike Hofstetter and passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of April 3, 2014, Minutes
A motion was made by Carlos Raices to accept the Minutes. The motion was seconded by David Long and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer’s Report
Treasurer Elizabeth Buck went over the report and noted that there was not enough money to print the Northern Staff News. Also, money is needed to purchase flowers for the Operating Staff Service Awards Banquet. It was agreed that funds could be used from the support account. A motion to accept the Treasurer’s report was made by Amy Polzin. The motion was seconded by Yvette Lubbers.

VI. Announcements/Correspondence
OSC President Andy Small announced that Amy Polzin will be retiring. The rest of the OSC congratulated Amy and wished her well.
Andy also announced that Yvette Lubbers and Pam Roesner are celebrating birthdays in May.

Rhonda Wybourn announced that Human Resources is going back to open, continuous testing, instead of posting just the top 50 positions. Starting May 1, Operating Staff can go out to HR and test when they want. Staff members will still have to wait 30 days before testing again. Some positions will still be posted, particularly those with unique requirements. Andy will make sure that this information is placed in NIU Today.

Deborah Haliczer announced that the Benefits Choice period starts May 1 and runs until June 2, 2014. CMS will be doing a dependent audit in the fall. Those who carry dependents on their health insurance plans will have to provide proof of those dependents using their IRS tax forms. The website for benefits choice is: www.benefitschoice.com.

David Long shared that the student center will be open 24 hours through Thursday, May 8.

President’s Report
A. Board of Trustees
   No report

B. Faculty Senate
   Dr. Rosenbaum is retiring. There was discussion about ITS consolidating its licenses for Microsoft contracts. Rahul Thatte shared that NIU’S new CIO, Brett Coryell, is talking about a collaboration that would allow for work and home use of Microsoft Office 2010. There will be a Brown Bag session in the Regency Room in the Holmes Student Center on Tuesday, May 20, which will take on the issue of computer access for all NIU employees. Rahul asked if there were any questions he could take to the Computing Facilities Advisory Committee meeting. Deborah Haliczer mentioned that introduction to IT is not part of new employee orientation yet.

C. University Council
   UC met April 30, 2014. It was the last meeting of the year and there was a reception. Bill Pitney will be the new secretary. Sara Klaper and Professor Alan Rosenbaum were reviewed and both received high marks.

VIII. Committee Reports
A. Workplace Issues
   The survey results and comments still need to be compiled, which should be accomplished by the OSC’s June meeting.
B. Elections and Appointments
The OSC election ballot is going out Monday, May 5. A new council will be assembled at the June meeting. There were 11 applications for five positions. Andy Small was very pleased with this. He feels that OSC needs more people on the Council, and alternates as well.

C. Public Relations
PR met and talked about the pension-retirement seminar. The group also looked at the survey compiled by the Workplace Issues subcommittee.

D. SPS Council
Deborah Haliczer shared that the first SPS/Faculty recognition event was held. Also, the first two dependent scholarship award winners were announced. SPS recognized OSC as the inspiration for this event. In addition, SPS just conducted a survey twitter-style on how SPS employees contribute to student career success. The SPS Council just had its election and Deborah Haliczer has been elected as President for the next two years. The remark was made that SPS Council and OSC speaking as a united front to President Baker seem to draw his full attention.

E. Visiting Committees/Guests
Andy Small introduced the Dependent Scholarship Award Winners. They are Jacqueline Lorusso, whose mother is Valerie Lorusso from NIU Outreach P-20, and Brittney Bonebright, whose mother is Sandra Bonebright from the Holmes Student Center.

Bill Nicklas, Vice President for Operations and Community Relations, was invited to the OSC meeting to address concerns of several groups on campus. The remodeling of the Holmes Student Center stands to once more make this building the center of student life. The ramifications of how people will work in the Student Center are uncertain. Accessibility to this building is an issue; more accessible entrances are needed (Americans with Disabilities Act). VP Nicklas shared the information that over the last year 800 seniors left NIU. This is a large number of students, especially when one considers they were within a year or so from graduating. These 800 students translates into a loss of $20 million in tuition dollars. In the meantime, DuSable, Reavis and Watson all need renovations. Money for this will have to come from a one-time capitol fund.

Dr. Baker came to NIU from the University of Idaho, where food services were outsourced. Food service workers have heard a rumor that they will be let go, and food service outsourced. Vice President Nicklas had no details to share on this issue. Sara Klaper asked about Building Services and Grounds, and Mr.
Nicklas hadn’t heard anything about those groups either. Robin Andersen pointed out that outsourcing brings up the issue of security. The safety of our students is paramount. Also, would employees from outside companies have the necessary customer service skills? NIU shouldn’t employ people who are just doing their jobs.

The fact that many people in the bargaining units don’t have access to computers was discussed. Vice President Nicklas said that he is not a CEO, but he supports President Baker’s vision for the university. Referencing Phyllis Livingston’s Letter to the Editor in the April 28, 2014, edition of the Northern Star, the visitors to the OSC meeting are stressed and worried. People have chosen not to retire, but what will happen to them if outsourcing commences? They need this information in order to make informed choices about their futures. Robin Andersen shared that she feels the operating staff feels disenfranchised, are worried about where we’ll be working next year, and that transparency doesn’t include us. It’s difficult to be productive when it feels like things are unraveling. OSC President Andy Small explained to VP Nicklas that former NIU President John Peters’ philosophy was that NIU is a family, and there would be no outsourcing. Andy asked Vice President Nicklas to go back to President Baker and ask him what his philosophy toward NIU is.

F. EAC
EAC met and discussed the Exemptions Procedures Manual and SPS and Civil Service hiring practices. It was remarked that the manual would need to have more teeth in it, making it into a rules manual. Human resource departments and EAC would have to approve of any changes.

G. UAC
No report

H. APAC
Robin Andersen reported that the Administrative Professionals Day Breakfast was very successful. There were plenty of donations, so no attendee had to pay. APAC continues to work on getting even pay periods, and is discussing parking fees. With so many employees retiring, APAC will need to work on filling vacancies within its council.

IX. Old Business
A. Andy Small spoke to President Baker about operating staff having an advisor just as faculty and SPS employees do. The discussion seemed productive, and the issue was given to Lisa Freeman. There has been no response yet. If the university administration is interested, then a proposal will be made. Yvette Lubbers remarked that operating staff want to be treated the same as faculty and SPS, and have the same access to this resource.
X. **New Business**
A. Andy Small’s Bold Idea is that NIU employees receive training in customer service directed specifically to students. This could take the form of a “Train the Trainer” program.

XI. **Adjournment**
The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Bivens
Operating Staff Council Secretary