Operating Staff Council  
HSC – Sky Room  
Minutes – September 4, 2014


Guests:  Robin Andersen, Lesley Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Sarah Klaper, Rose Miller, Andy Peccarelli, William Pitney, Kay Shelton

I.  Call to Order  
President Jay Monteiro called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:02 AM.

II.  Roll Call  
Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

III.  Approval of Agenda  
A motion was made by Andy Small to accept the Agenda with changes. The motion was seconded by John Hulseberg and passed by unanimous vote.

IV.  Approval of August 7, 2014, Minutes  
A motion was made Holly Nicholson to accept the Minutes with changes. The motion was seconded by Gina Shannon and passed by unanimous vote.

V.  Treasurer’s Report  
Treasurer Elizabeth Buck announced there was no report as there was no activity in the Council’s accounts.

VI.  Announcements/Correspondence  
Sarah Klaper announced that 2014 marks the 45th anniversary of the Office of the Ombudsperson. It is NIU’s oldest office. There will be a reception on September 9, 2014, to celebrate this occasion.

A wine and cheese social will be held in the Rare Books and Special Collections Room at Founders Memorial Library. The reception will
take place September 4, 2014, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, and is hosted by the Friends of the NIU Libraries.

Patricia Liberty-Baczek shared that the Huskies Student Food Pantry is open from 5:30 to 7:30 PM on the first and third Thursday of each month, and is available to serve those NIU students who are food insecure.

SURS appointments are available for November 3 and 4, 2014. Individual counseling appointments will be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis from Wednesday, September 3, 2014, until Friday, October 3, 2014.

VII. President’s Report
A. Board of Trustee
   No report

B. Faculty Senate
   Met September 3, 2014; Bill Pitney reported that OSC President Jay Monteiro is doing a great job.

C. University Council
   No report

VIII. Committee Reports
A. Workplace Issues
   No report; Karen Smith shared that she has put together a report on VIBE so everyone can view it.

B. Elections and Appointments
   Dave Long asked for someone to volunteer as an alternate on the Parking Appeals Committee. Patricia Liberty-Baczek agreed to take on this role.

C. Public Relations
   Patricia Liberty-Baczek, PR Chair, said the last meeting was canceled due to illness. On Thursday, August 28, at 11:00 AM, there was a meeting at which OSC polo shirts, thank you notes, and welcome letters were discussed.
D. SPS Council
Deborah Haliczer shared that President Baker attended the SPS Council’s August 14 meeting. Dr. Baker gave a PowerPoint presentation. Deborah reminded the OSC members that we’re invited to attend all SPS events.

E. Visiting Committees/Guests
NIU President Doug Baker was our guest at this meeting. Dr. Baker was given a list of questions beforehand. Before starting this part of the meeting, he announced that he was giving the go ahead on the position of Operating Staff Advisor. OSC President Jay Monteiro can now form a subcommittee, and this process can move forward.

Enrollment trends: What is our situation? There’s been a decline in student enrollment, we’ve lost 5000 students and lost $25 million in state support. When Dr. Baker arrived in 2013, he had no idea how much money NIU had, which is why he brought in consultants. NIU is in a strategically weak place. The university is having a great deal of difficulty retaining students. The percentage of returning students continues to drop, and we’re losing transfer students, too. Between 2002 – 2012, NIU lost $20 million and lost 66 people (staff and faculty). The gap’s been improved by raising tuition, but we out priced ourselves. We gave $1 million in scholarships, but had to give more in financial aid. There’s still a $15 million gap. Open positions are given a green, meaning they’ve been given a go to hire, yellow=wait, red=no.

In admissions, the business process is being retooled and there is more hands-on training taking place. Relationships with Latino and Asian communities are being built. For community colleges with students who are NIU bound, students can send credits back to the community college to get an A.A. or A.S. degree. In the works are programs with alumni who are teachers or counselors. Students can receive scholarships through their high school teachers or counselors who are NIU alumni. Another way to bring students to NIU and help them want to stay is through a Bridge program. In the summer prior to their freshman year, the student will come to NIU to plan a fall schedule, learn about campus, get to know fellow students, and will already have friends and contacts when fall semester starts.
Dr. Baker noted that if NIU charges in-state tuition, NIU loses money. If NIU charges out-of-state tuition for in-state students, the university would have much more money, however, the ethics of that is very questionable. Andy Small pointed out that the international student enrollment might be increasing, and they pay out-of-state tuition. Sarah Klapar asked about the support for international students. Dr. Baker responded saying that he saw an orientation session and liked what he saw. Patricia Liberty-Baczek pointed out that it’s nearly impossible for these students to find a job after they arrive at NIU, and they are not permitted to work off campus.

It was pointed out during Dr. Baker’s visit that NIU employees have gone without raises since January 2012. He responded, saying he could give raises, but then would have to lay off workers. Either enrollment has to increase or expenses must be reduced before raises can be considered. Dr. Baker admitted that the lack of raises is affecting morale. Dr. Baker explained that Nancy Suttenfield has been assigned to Capitol Planning Process; money is being spent on long-term items, not things that are put in and taken out soon after.

It was noted that there is no “departments housed within each building” list in the A – Z directory on the NIU website. Dr. Baker said that could be added since the website is being redone.

There was a question about the future of the East Lagoon. Dr. Baker seemed puzzled by this, and recounted several occasions and events that he’s attended at the lagoon. Stacey Bivens told him of the result of a poll done by Northern Now, the alumni magazine, in which the lagoon was the first thing that alumni remember about the NIU campus.

F. EAC
   Andy Small reminded the Council that NIU will be audited in September.

G. UAC
   Met briefly; discussed UC committees and shared governance.
H. APAC
Robin Andersen shared that Vice-President Bill Nicklas attended APAC’s August meeting. Topics discussed included: improving employees’ morale, the graduated parking fee, and pay periods.

IX. Old Business
A. Student Retention: What Can We Do As a Council?
   It was noted that there are buttons NIU employees can wear with the saying: “Ask me…I can help you.” However, as Barb Andree pointed out, it feels insulting to be told repeatedly to be nice, kind, and helpful…when we already do those things and more.

B. Council of Councils
   This conference will take place on October 17 at SIU – Carbondale.

C. Adding New (Missing) Member
   This issue was tabled until the October 2, 2014, meeting.

X. New Business
A. Subcommittee for the Operating Staff Advisor Position
   It was agreed that the Operating Staff Advisor should be an operating staff member. The following people agreed to serve on the subcommittee: Patricia Liberty-Baczek, Holly Nicholson, Carlos Raices, Pamela Roesner, Andy Small (chair), and Rhonda Wybourn (ex-officio member).

XI. Adjournment
   The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Bivens
Operating Staff Council Secretary