Minutes
Operating Staff Council
October 1, 2015
Sky Room – 9:00 a.m.


Absent: Carlos Raices

Guests: Lesley Gilbert, Liz Guess, Ann Kenney, Sarah Klaper, Celeste Latham, Rose Miller, Renee Page, Andy Small, Rhonda Wybourn

I. Call to Order
President Holly Nicholson called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:03 a.m.

II. Roll Call
Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

III. Approval of Agenda
A motion was made by Barbara Andree to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Victoria Nay and passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of September 3, 2015, Minutes
A motion was made by Holly Nicholson to table the minutes until the OSC’s November meeting so that all OSC members would have time to read them.

V. Visiting Committees/Guests
Guests at the OSC meeting from Human Resource Services were Liz Guess, Ann Kenney, Celeste Latham, and Rhonda Wybourn. Latham explained the memo that staff received regarding the number of hours student employees and graduate assistants could work. The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) mandates that employers must offer affordable insurance to all employees who work more than 30 hours per week. Central Management Services will not allow NIU to provide insurance to anyone not paying into the state pension system. RFPs for gap insurance providers have received no response. So for the time being, in order to avoid significant fines, students are limited to working no more than 25 hours per week. Jeffries asked Latham if it would be better to hire full-time employees rather than have extra-help employees. Latham said that was an option. An audit of
dependent eligibility has been done by HMS Employer Solutions. NIU employees who have their children on their insurance need to send copies of the children’s birth certificates by October 30, 2015. Payment of claims was discussed. Memos from Central Management Services say that at some point they will not be able to pay claims. It was pointed out that this would be a breach of contract. Jeffries asked Guess if she was following Governor Rauner’s attempts to change insurance details. Kenney announced that the Human Resource Services website will have a more customer centered focus. Brown had questions about FMLA leave, contact numbers, and whether e-mail should be added to the form. This is not necessary, because Outlook will fill that in. Jeffries wanted to know what number to call regarding workers’ compensation, as well as where she could find the employee misconduct policy on the Human Resource Service’s website.

VI. Treasurer’s Report
Zach Bohn could not give the treasurer’s report as he has not yet been given approval to receive OSC financial reports.

VII. Announcements/Correspondence
Because OSC meetings have been running very long, Holly Nicholson suggested that committees give action reports so that the meetings run more efficiently. University administration has authorized release time for employees to attend the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women conference. The Division of Marketing and Communications is e-mailing an online brand perception survey. All staff and faculty who receive a survey are asked to participate. Andree shared that the new AFSCME union will affect almost every Civil Service job on campus. K. Smith announced that the annual Ethics Training will begin on October 15th and continue through November 13th. K. Smith also announced that the DeKalb County Health Department and the NIU Employee Assistance Program will be providing flu shots again this year. Wybourn shared that the Employee Advisory Committee (EAC) will have its election on November 12.

VIII. President’s Report
A. Board of Trustees
   The meeting report can be found online.

B. Faculty Senate
   No report

C. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)
   Gilbert reported that the SPS Council’s next meeting is scheduled for October 8. SPS Council will be writing a letter to state officials regarding funding for universities.
D. University Council
Did not meet

IX. Committee Reports
A. Workplace Issues
Met on September 23rd and discussed goals. How do we best communicate with employees, especially those without computer access like building service workers?

Ad hoc Employee Morale
Met September 17th.

B. Elections and Appointments
Did not meet.

C. Public Relations
Page, chair of the Outstanding Service Award selection committee, said the committee spoke about possible changes to the nomination criteria, but the only change being made is moving up the application deadline one month earlier to January 29, 2016. There was discussion comparing the OSC’s “Someone You Should Know” to Dr. Baker’s “Applaud a Colleague” initiative. The committee also discussed the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship Award, and agreed to keep the minimum acceptable GPA at 2.5. Discussion about buying a camera for OSC had been tabled from the month before. Nicholson’s department had given her a camera that was going to be sent to surplus, so Nicholson said we could use that camera rather than purchasing a new one. Creative Services will provide photography for OSC events during normal business hours.

D. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)
Small, EAC Chair, informed OSC that Jeff Brownfield had been chosen as Director for the State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS). He also announced that Council of Councils is scheduled to take place at Illinois State University on October 15 – 16. Small reported that NIU finally received its audit results, and they were very good. Sixty-seven jobs had been flagged at the previous audit. This time much fewer positions were flagged. EAC is working on making audits “less painful” by reducing the turn-around time.

E. University Advisory Committee (UAC)
Did not meet

F. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)
There are currently three vacancies on APAC. Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of this council, should contact Rose Miller in Human Resource Services. APAC is conducting a mentoring program for workers who have been employed for six months. They are still awaiting word from SUCSS on the fate of typing tests.

G. Legislative Committee
   Did not meet

X. Old Business
   A. Operating Staff Personnel Advisor Position
      The paperwork for this position is now in Provost Lisa Freeman’s office. In a few months, the position will need to be added to the university’s constitution and bylaws. The OSC will vote for the person to fill the position on July 1, 2016, the same time as the council votes for its executive committee.

   B. Letter to State Officials
      Representative Bob Pritchard challenged those in higher education to write letters to legislators stressing the vital importance and need to fund universities. Presidents of the state universities have written a letter. NIU’s SPS Council will be writing a letter, and Operating Staff Council’s letter is ready to be finalized and will be sent out via email for council members’ approval.

   C. OSC Camera/Hiring Photographers
      See IX. C

   D. Meeting Refreshments
      In a move to save money, a motion was made by Patricia Liberty-Baczek to request only coffee, tea and water be made available at the OSC meetings. The motion was seconded by Zach Bohn and passed by unanimous vote.

   E. Rotating Meetings
      The Council discussed rotating meeting venues. John Hulseberg pointed out that OSC should meet close to areas where there are a number of operating staff working, so they can attend our meetings. Patricia Liberty-Baczek recommended that we meet at the field house for our December meeting.

XI. New Business
   A. Marketing and Communications Survey
      See VII

   B. University Budget Inquiries
      There was discussion regarding expanding the H2O to Go program. The student
who created this has graduated, and expansion would be costly.

C. Virtual Suggestion Box
   This is located on the OSC’s home page. It is important to let employees know this is available.

D. Employee Release Time for PCSW Conference
   See VII

XII. Adjournment
     The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Bivens
Operating Staff Council Secretary