Minutes
Operating Staff Council
March 3, 2016
Sky Room – 9:00 a.m.


Absent: Angie Gutierrez-Vargas, Yvette Lubbers, Carlos Raices, David Smith

Guests: Jeff Brownfield, Ferald Bryan, Steve Builta, Sarah Klaper, Greg Long, Rose Miller, Andy Small, Rhonda Wybourn

I. Call to Order
President Holly Nicholson called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:05 a.m.

II. Roll Call
Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens

III. Approval of Agenda
A motion was made by Liberty-Baczek to accept the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Bohn and passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of February 4, 2016, minutes
A motion was made by Roesner to accept the February 4, 2016, minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Jeffries and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer’s Report
Bohn read through the report, making notice of the $25 paid for refreshments at the February 4, 2016, OSC meeting. A motion was made by Hulseberg to accept the treasurer’s report. The motion was seconded by K. Smith and passed by unanimous vote.

VI. Visiting Committees/Guests
Professor Ferald Bryan from the Communication Department, and parliamentarian for University Council, presented a “Parliamentary Procedure Primer” for the OSC. He explained that his role as parliamentarian was to be seen and not heard, and that he is advisory and non-voting. As a member of a group, it is important to know the rules, bylaws, and constitution of that group, just as U.S. citizens should understand democracy. Professor Bryan explained that there are other parliamentary guide books besides Robert’s Rules of Order, which is the one most used. One example is The Standard Code by Alice Sturgis. The problem with Robert’s Rules is that it is very complex. It was written by a
soldier who was also an engineer. There is an online version which is searchable. Why do we need parliamentary procedure? It ensures majority rule; protects the rights of the minority, absentees, and individual members; provides order fairness, and decorum; and facilitates the transaction of business. Members of a group have equal rights, privileges and obligations; a quorum must be present; full and free discussion is a basic right; one question at a time/one person at a time. Members have the right to know what has the floor, what is the pending question, and have it restated before a vote is taken. No person can speak until recognized by the chair, and personal remarks or attacks are out of order. A 2/3 vote is required for any motions that deprives a member of rights in any way, or to end debate. It is important to remember that silence gives consent. The chair or presiding officer should always remain impartial, if this person can vote. Sometimes it is best they not vote, unless it’s to break a tie. Making a motion is obtaining the floor by being recognized by the chair. A motion is normally seconded by another member before it can be considered. Seconding does not mean that a member agrees with the motion; only that the motion warrants discussion. Before the motion is restated by the chair, any member may suggest modification of the wording or to clarify the motion. Jeffries wanted clarification on ex officio committee members. It was explained that ex officios cannot vote at meetings, but can speak. Nicholson pointed out that the OSC does have a formal public comment part of its meetings.

Sarah Klaper, university ombudsperson, gave a presentation about meeting decorum. When all members of a group observe decorum, meetings will run more efficiently and effectively. NIU is structured as a shared governance institution. Operating staff have only two votes on University Council, so OSC needs to get buy-in from others on campus in order to accomplish their goals. It is important to keep the end goal in mind. The OSC represents the operating staff. Meetings should be run efficiently: address concerns; resolve issues with minimal frustration; have clarity in decision-making; and be strategic in comments. Ms. Klaper listed several examples of effective conduct: listen, work together for the common good, demonstrate respect for others’ time and opinions, and no “gotcha moments.” Other types of behavior expected at meetings include: waiting to be recognized, treating others like you’d like to be treated (the Golden Rule), attending meetings, not talking over others, rephrasing questions, avoiding personal attacks, and not questioning motives. Other kinds of conduct include addressing remarks through the chair, imputing good motives, and checking assumptions. Also, each person should ask: What kind of attitude am I bringing with me to this meeting?

Also attending the OSC meeting was Jeff Brownfield, the executive director of the State Universities Civil Service System. He was appointed by the Merit Board in September 2015. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, he was unable to speak and answer questions as much as he and those in attendance would have liked. He did talk about his concerns regarding auditing procedures, particularly that jobs were being correctly classified as civil service and not academic professional (AP). The AP designation is what we here at NIU
know as SPS. SUCCS has developed an emergency rule regarding furloughs, effective March 1, which will be in effect for 150 days. This allows furloughed employees to maintain benefits. The Rule of Three was recently updated to include the top three scores instead of top three individuals. Out-of-state recruitment is now allowed for designated occupational areas.

VII. Public Comment
No report

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence
Provost Lisa Freeman and Vice President for Administration and Finance Al Phillips have approved additional support for OSC and SPSC. The councils will be sharing a full-time clerical support position and office space in Altgeld 103. The council presidents will also be provided with three days of release time per month for council activity. A memorandum of understanding will be negotiated when an employee declares their intent to pursue council presidency.

The OSC will hold its April meeting in room 315 of Altgeld. The recipients of the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship Awards will be in attendance, as well as the Program Prioritization chairs. Nicholson asked any OSC members who have questions about program prioritization process to get those to her by March 17. There was also discussion about refreshments at the April meeting. There is a fee to deliver refreshments from the student center to another location on campus. A motion was made by Andree to have the council’s regular refreshments (ice and hot water, regular and decaf coffee) brought to Altgeld 315. The motion was seconded by Liberty-Baczek and passed by vote with one abstention.

The NIU Student Association is undertaking a green initiative, in order to make NIU a more sustainably conscious university. Offices can self-evaluate and be certified bronze or silver, or work with the SA’s Director of Environmental Affairs to be certified gold. The SA is working with the NIU Green Team and OSEEL on this initiative. The contact person is Stuart Nissenbaum. Nay brought up the H2O to Go drinking water stations. These were/are very popular. But, it seems that senior projects stop when the student graduates.

The NIU Student Association’s campaign to help eliminate the stigma of mental illness is called “No Shame.”

Roesner announced that the Health and Wellness Fair will take place on Wednesday, March 30, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. A sign-up sheet for the OSC table was passed around.
Jeffries shared that the AFSCME bargaining unit met in January. The next meeting is scheduled for March 7.

Andree stated that she had voted early. Everyone was reminded, though, that they had to be a resident of DeKalb County in order to do that locally.

IX. President’s Reports
A. Executive Committee
No report

B. Board of Trustees
Met February 18, 2016. Nicholson is one of the University Advisory Committee (UAC) representatives for the Compliance, Audit, Risk Management and Legal Affairs (CARL) and Finance, Facilities and Operations (FFO) committees.

Nicholson asked the CARL committee for dedication of resources to restoring the Business Procedure Manual, especially the employee handbooks, to the website as soon as possible. There were presentations about NIU’s enterprise risk management initiative, an update to the gift ban, and a proposed freedom of expression policy.

In FFO, Nicholson made a statement of appreciation for the sacrifices of NIU staff and faculty and hope for returning to more sustainable staffing and compensation levels when NIU is given a budget. Various expenditures and contracts were approved, and a quarterly financial summary was shared, which can be accessed online.

C. Faculty Senate
No report

D. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)
See XII. A

E. University Council
University Council changed the wording on changing bylaws to read: a vote on an amendment to the bylaws requires the presence of 60 percent plus one of the total voting membership of University Council. To become effective, an amendment must be approved by the greater of: a) a majority of the total voting membership of University Council; or b) two-thirds of the voting members in attendance.

X. Committee Reports
A. Elections and Appointments
Met February 29, 2016, and discussed an accelerated voting process so that new OSC members could be elected in time to take part in choosing who would fill the Operating
Staff Personnel Advisor position. A motion was made by Liberty-Baczek to approve a call-for-candidates sheet. The motion was seconded by Monteiro and passed by unanimous vote.

B. Employee Morale
This committee met, but did not have a quorum. The next meeting is scheduled for March 9.

C. Legislative Committee
No report.

D. Public Relations
Three students have been chosen to receive the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship Award. Each student will receive $1000.00 ($500.00 per semester).

E. Workplace Issues
Met February 27, 2016. Sarah Lindell was also in attendance. The committee talked about presenting Brown Bag sessions this year like those offered last year, and wants to establish at least three topics. The committee also discussed the next operating staff survey. The last survey was conducted over three years ago. Hulseberg would like to make sure that the operating staff in building services and the trades have access to the survey once it is available. Nay expressed concern regarding operating staff employees who don’t have a computer having access to their emails. It was suggested that a policy be established to make computers, possibly taken from surplus, available in departments that have operating staff employees without access to their employee e-mail.

F. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)
Miller shared that APAC is planning the yearly breakfast, which will take place April 27. Due to new rules, APAC cannot solicit door prizes this year. Nominations for the Pat Siebrasse award are due on March 4.

G. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)
No report

H. University Advisory Committee (UAC)
No report

XI. Old Business
A. Operating Staff Service Award in OSC Bylaws
A motion was made by Andree to accept the bylaws. The motion was seconded by Hulseberg and passed by unanimous vote.
B. Open Meetings Act
Still waiting for a decision from Greg Brady, University Legal Services, so this matter remains tabled.

C. Report from Vicky Nay
Due to time constraints, Nay agreed to present her report at the April OSC meeting.

D. Operating Staff Personnel Advisor Position
This position has been approved. However, there are concerns about points 4 and 5 on the job description. Nicholson will contact Provost Freeman for clarification.

XII. New Business
A. Employee Compensation Policies (Postgraduate Degree/Professional Certification Program)
Builta explained that currently only operating staff may be compensated when they receive a certificate or graduate degree. This policy does not include supportive professional staff. The SPS Council believes that the achievement of and compensation for post-baccalaureate and post-graduate degrees, or professional certificates is a retention and morale issue. A 2-5% increase in pay should be awarded based on relevancy to the employee’s position. Faculty receive pay increases as they move up the tenure ladder, regardless of NIU’s budget situation. The SPS Council is asking for the OSC’s support of this proposal. A few OSC members felt they needed more time to look over the proposal before making a decision. A motion was made by Jeffries to table a decision on this matter until the OSC’s April meeting. The motion was seconded by Nay and passed by unanimous vote.

XIII. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Bivens
Operating Staff Council Secretary