

MINUTES 11/14/02

8:30AM – HSC306

Present: Elizabeth Buck, Gay Campbell, Sara Clayton, Marcia Dick, Ada Hetland, Linda Jennings, Jay Monteiro, Glenda Jones, Theresa Kinniry, Joe Koch, Dena Olson, Andy Small, Donna Smith, and LaRonda Thuestad.

Excused: Judy Burgess and Michele Crase

Guests: Tim Griffin, Larry Sallberg, Eric Smith, and Jodi Tyrrell

I. Call to Order

President Sara Clayton called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. Prior to the meeting, the Council had their annual picture taken. President Clayton then welcomed Eric Smith, Associate Director of Compliance and Labor Relations at Human Resource Services. The Council members introduced themselves to Smith and welcomed him to the meeting. Smith came to NIU from Illinois State University where he was the Labor Relations Administrator and negotiated contracts. He will have the same job here with the addition of serving as the Chief Investigator for Affirmative Action discrimination claims.

II. OS Dependent Awardees

Clayton welcomed Bob Anthenat and his daughter, Kerig, as well as the Welch family, and had the Council introduce themselves to the guests. Joe Koch opened each presentation with a few words and pictures of each awardee and their families were taken by Jay Monteiro. Kerig Anthenat, an English major with an emphasis in linguistics, thanked the Council for the award. She graduated cum laude from Kishwaukee Junior College and hopes to become a missionary translator in Africa. Brandon Welch and his parents, Bill and Chris, all expressed their thanks. Brandon is also an English major and will graduate in May. He was a recipient of this award the first year it was offered, so many on the Council were happy to see him again. Brandon is not certain what direction he will go after graduation. Kerig and Brandon were selected from a pool of eight strong applicants.

III. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed.

IV. Approval of Minutes of October 10, 2002, Meeting

A motion was made to accept the minutes as amended:

V.10. [See September 12, 2002 minutes] Delete "*Principle Administrative Assistant*" from sentence.

VI.C. Change last sentence to read "*Three people are stepping down from the Outstanding Service Awards Committee and Crase currently has one replacement.*"

VI.E. Delete "*Principle Administrative Assistant*" from second sentence in the paragraph.

VII.A. Bold the word **Motion** to set it apart from the rest of the sentence instead of underlining it. In the next to last sentence of the paragraph, change University Benefits Committee to Operating Staff Council Benefits Committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

V. Treasurer's Report

Elizabeth Buck distributed copies of the Treasurer's report for the four-month period ending 10/31/02. Buck went through the report with the Council, explaining the three expenses for October. Those expenses were coffee for the October meeting, some postage, and the fee for the van that was taken to the Council of Councils meeting in Chicago. After general discussion, a motion was made to accept the report. The motion was seconded and passed.

VI. Announcements/Correspondence

1. Both Clayton and Jodi Tyrrell had copies of the 51st Annual Report from the State Universities Civil Service System for FY02. Tyrrell made note in the report of some of the things Mr. Morelock is proposing will be done, such as the technology initiative of the development and implementation of online testing. These reports were passed around the table for the Council to examine.
2. Clayton announced that HRS would be having the First Annual HRS Autumn Open House on Thursday, November 21, 2002, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in room 166. The entire campus community is invited.
3. Smith passed around a copy of the ISU Newsletter for the Council's perusal.
4. Tyrrell said that NIU is currently the only university in the state using the pilot program. Some schools are resistant to this program because of the sheer numbers of applicants they have. HRS just completed their first one, doing a Business Administrative Associate in the University Libraries where there was a Civil Service vacancy. An SPS vacancy could cause a little difficulty. Following discussion of the pilot program, Tyrrell informed the Council that the changes in the referral process for departments filling secretarial vacancies seems to be working very well.
5. Tyrrell announced that HRS has received the interim Audit Report from the Civil Service System audit done last August. It was a good report and overall the Systems Office was impressed and had a lot of good things to say about our operation. HRS has to send a number of job descriptions down by early December. After that, they will get their final audit.
6. Tyrrell informed the Council that an insert will be included with paper paychecks, letting people know that because the university will be officially closed on the 29th of November and the 31st of December, their paychecks will be sent to their home addresses. She also reminded the Council of the memorandum from Steve Cunningham stating that the university will remain open on December 23 in accordance with the previously distributed 2002 holiday schedule.
7. Andy Small reported on the Council of Councils meeting that Joe Koch, Ada Hetland, Judy Burgess, and he attended on October 11, 2002, and brought greetings to our Council from Stefan Howard, President of the UIC Staff Advisory Council. Small said it was a pleasant and interesting day at UIC and he learned quite a bit about the UIC Council and university. He observed that a number of councils from around the state are getting to be more respected and better organized. North Eastern will be hosting the Council of Councils meeting next October. The comradery and networking at these events is good for all the schools and Small encouraged as many of the Council as possible to attend next year's event. Hetland and Koch also gave a quick report of the day to the Council, reiterating the positive energy and dynamics happening throughout the state through each respective Council. One idea presented during the day was that the president's of the Councils should communicate on a regular basis, perhaps by email, and meet together at least once a year before the Council of Councils meeting. Hetland concurred. UIC is an impressive urban facility and Koch encouraged the Council to visit the campus at their earliest opportunity.
8. Clayton mentioned a concern that had been brought to her attention concerning supervisor's opening employee's mail marked personal and confidential. Clayton asked the Council if there was a policy in place regarding this issue. The Council was informed that this was happening in only a few cases. General discussion ensued regarding the extent of a supervisor's authority in the workplace. Federal postal regulations do not apply. Clayton will keep the Council posted on this issue.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Personnel/Staff Development/Benefits.

Hetland reported that the committee met October 28, 2002. They had received the minutes from the University Benefits Committee and there was really nothing in those minutes that would affect us. Hetland reported that the University Benefits Committee put together an Ad Hoc committee to look into dental benefits for all employees. LaRonda Thuestad volunteered to serve on this committee.

The committee went over the FY04-05 university calendar and reported on the Council of Councils meeting. There will be another IEA-NEA Union meeting on November 20, 2002. Marcia Dick will attend. A scheduled time for another Benefits Committee meeting has not been set.

B. Elections and Appointments. No report.

C. Public Relations

Koch announced that the committee met and discussed the Outstanding Service Award for staff. Connie Rummer from Economics and a winner of this award two years ago, is doing the brochure for later distribution. Applications will be going out after the first of the year when people return from the holidays. Northern Staff News is on Koch's desk. It will be a pretty lengthy document and should include several pictures. The committee discussed putting the minutes on the web. Donna Mathesius, from the University Council, will put the minutes on the University Council home page and there will be a link on the OSC home page as well. Koch asked that Gigi Beaird be sent copies of the OSC minutes, since she is a member of his committee and will be helping Jay with the Newsletter.

D. Visiting Committee.

Larry Sallberg, Director, Grants Fiscal Administration, and NIU's representative on the SURS Members Advisory Committee joined the Council meeting to report on the SURSMAC meeting held in Champaign, Illinois, on Tuesday, October 22, 2002. Sallberg distributed copies of the agenda for the meeting and handouts. Sallberg encouraged Council members to go online to get information on Social Security offset to retirement. This particularly affects anyone who has worked outside NIU and has paid Social Security taxes. Many groups are taking a proactive approach to getting this issue changed. Council members do receive questions about this issue from time and asked Mr. Sallberg to keep the Council informed as he gains new information. Sallberg announced that in an effort to help with the state budget crunch, the Advocate, a quarterly publication of the State Universities Retirement System of Illinois, will no longer be printed and mailed, but only available online.

Mr. Sallberg went quickly over the SURSMAC agenda with the Council members and then explained the handouts of the financial data he distributed. Distributed sheets were plan statistics, selected fiscal year 2002 financial data, current asset allocations, total assets and liabilities, SURS current financial status, and SURS changing financial status. It is clear from the charts that the SURS program took a financial hit during the past year. As of June 30, 2001, total assets were 10.8 billion. The next year, June 30, 2002, total assets were \$9.8 Billion. While assets went down, liabilities went up from \$14.9 Billion in FY01 to \$16.7 Billion in FY02. Liabilities go up because people in the system have earned future benefits. Sallberg explained each handout and asked for questions. He also distributed a copy of the Fidelity funds available for employees with the self-managed plan. Sallberg led a general discussion on information he garnered from the SURS meeting. He also left copies of the member guide booklets for the self-managed plan, the portable benefit plan, the traditional benefit plan, and the annuitant guide for the Council's files.

- E. EAC. No report.
- F. UAC. No report.
- G. University Council

Koch reported that this was a very short meeting and that a majority of the time President Peters commented on the budget at NIU, the changes in state government at Springfield, and tightening our belt. Peters plans to be spending quite a bit of time in Springfield. The revenue for the state of Illinois for October is 200M **under** budget and 42 other states are in serious financial straights, some worse and some better than Illinois. Basically there were no committee reports. The President's and Chancellor's of the 12 state universities will be calling a meeting soon with the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The Academic Policy Committee reported that they are meeting with the Faculty Senate on IRB concerns and will be formulating a set of proposals.

- H. Special Events Committee.

Thuestad and Elizabeth Buck met with John Gordon, Director of the Convocation Center, on Tuesday, November 12, 2002, to discuss next year's event. Mr. Gordon gave a ball-park figure of the cost for this year's event and it will be about \$1,000 higher than last year. It seems the committee is meeting pretty early for planning, but there are more logistical problems this year because the event will not be held in the center of the campus. Transportation to the event is also something that the committee is working on. Dena Olson suggested the bus would pick up at one location, Holmes Student Center, and would run two buses with a bus leaving the Center every 10 minutes. The last pickup at the Center for anyone to eat would be 12:30 p.m. and would start after 1:00 p.m. from the Convocation Center returning people to Holmes Student Center. A discounted cost from Transportation for the two buses would be \$420.00. The committee needs to let Transportation know early in the spring if they want to do this. Thuestad reported there would be no charge for parking at the Convocation Center for any employee that wants to drive to the event.

VIII. Old Business

- A. Proposed University Calendar

Clayton distributed a copy of a ten-year calendar of proposed university holidays that she received from Lynn Pinne which started with 2001. Hetland was working from a proposed calendar she received from the University Council dated March 25, 1998. Hetland and the committee went through the proposed holidays up to FY04-05 and examined the exact number of days given to employees each year. Her committee saw no problem with the proposed calendar for FY04-05 and recommended that the OSC concur with the submitted university calendar proposal. Clayton will send our recommended proposal to the University Affairs Committee of the University Council.

- B. IEA-NEA Union Status

Marcia Dick reported on the organizing meeting held October 16, 2002, at Pagliai's Restaurant in DeKalb. Several Council members were in attendance in order to educate themselves and help the Council make an informed decision. The Union representative is on campus and is not being pushy, but is visible. The representative cannot disrupt the business of the university, but can approach employees on their break, lunch, etc. This union is highly organized and the website says they have 110,000 members statewide, predominately elementary and grade school districts. They are reaching into Higher Education. The informational meeting said over and over again about the strength of union/lawyer representation. The Council went on to discuss how often an employee would be in need of representation other than what is currently in place. By and large, dismissal of a Civil Service employee at NIU is a very rare thing. One question the Council entertained was *"Do we need to pay Union dues in order to have the*

benefit of representation?" Fair-share dues could take most of an employee's raise. Unionization could create a setup for bumping jobs during years of budget cuts and constraints. After discussion, consensus was reached that as a governance group, it is important for OS Council members to get information and stay as educated as possible on this issue. The Operating Staff Council serves as an advisory council for Civil Service employees, just as a Union would do, and needs to be of help to employees that come to us for direction and/or resolution. The next Union informational meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2002, at Pagliai's and several Council members will attend in order to help us all stay as informed as possible.

IX. New Business

No new business.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m. The motion was seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Gay Campbell
OSC Secretary