

**Supportive Professional Staff Council
Draft Minutes – General Meeting**

August 10, 2023

Hybrid Teams Meeting

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

AL 203

Approved September 14, 2023

Call to Order: President Bohanon called the meeting to order at 9:54 a.m.

Roll Call: Administrative Aide called roll and confirmed a quorum

Members Present: Felicia Bohanon, Cody Carter, Heath Duncan, Liz Guess, Joe Lovelace, Margaret Myles, Tom O’Grady, Candice Olagunju, Andrew Rogers, Christina Sutcliffe, Manuel Valdez

Members Excused: Bill Braksick, Jesse Perez, Michelle Pickett, Anthony Preston, Ronald Smith, Shannon Stoker, Lauren Teso-Warner, Dan Wolfe

Guests: Ben Creed, Patricia Erickson

Approval of Agenda: Properly motioned and seconded (O’Grady/Myles); all in favor, none opposed, Agenda approved by voice vote.

Approval of May 11, 2023, Minutes: Properly motioned and seconded (Rogers/Duncan) all in favor, none opposed; May minutes approved by voice vote.

University Committee Reports

a) Board of Trustees: Ben Creed shared highlights of Ismael’s latest BOT report:

- Freeman requested the deletion of programs in geography and submitted three program name changes related to geology, having to do with realignment of programs.
- Freeman recommended 5% across the board salary increments for non-represented faculty and staff, effective in July.
- Freeman requested approval for the appointment of Dr. Carol A. Sumner, the new Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer who succeeds Bernice Edghill Walden.

b) Faculty Senate & University Council: Ben Creed, Ismael Montana’s successor as President of Faculty Senate and Chair of University Council. Upcoming meetings are: Faculty Senate 9/6 and University Council 9/13.

c) Student Government Association (SGA): No report.

d) Operating Staff Council: No report.

Vice-President's Report: Tom O'Grady reporting:

a) Parking Committee: Discussion about updating some of the parking lot designations—mixing blue and yellow spaces. There were a lot of blue spaces not being used during the day so they thought it would be beneficial for the students to be able to use those. Some concerns were raised which Tom will take back to the committee.

b) Innovative Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee (May report)

Megan Woodruff reporting:

Announcements on several of the awards for Outstanding Graduate Teaching Recipients, and excellence in Online Teaching. These were presented as well as the Faculty Awards in April. Announcement of new Course Materials Affordability Leading Impact Awards-which have also been presented to departments.

Discussion on upcoming Online Teaching symposium and summer program planning.

Feedback was requested on Kaltura retention guidelines for video storage.

Further discussion on AI.CHAT GPT

New Business:

a) Election of Officers/Nominations

Treasurer: Ronald Smith

Secretary: Manuel Valdez

Vice President: Tom O'Grady

President Bohanon called for a motion to approve the Slate. (Myles/Duncan) Properly motioned and seconded. President Bohanon called for a motion to accept the Slate as presented. All in favor, none opposed, the motion carries, the Slate is accepted as presented, Congratulations to our 2023-2024 Officers thank you for your willingness to serve.

b) Review of Committees

President Bohanon asked if all our current committees were right for where we are now or do we need to look at having additional or different committees. Bohanon proposed the council discuss the relevance of each committee as she solicits individuals to serve.

Awards: President Bohanon asked anyone who previously served on that committee for their comments about last year. Bohanon noted that we no longer have presidential awards for excellence because those have become part of the general university wide awards.

Our council awards are specifically for individuals who are SPS staff. Having served on the university committee, less than two percent of those awards went to SPS staff.

The nominations were very limited on who got nominated for university awards from the SPS group. This council should keep our SPS specific awards which may entice people to make

nominations, noting this past year in particular, the committee really struggled to get any nominations.

We need to figure out if we are going to keep this Awards committee and how to either get the information out better or to more effectively solicit nominees. We are struggling to recognize individuals who are going above and beyond within our category on campus.

Bohanon noted a marketing issue and wondered if our awards should be at a different time of year? Would that make a difference?

- One suggestion was to open nominations in the fall (September, October, November) with an actual deadline in the Spring (March or April for example).
- Another suggestion was to increase the SPS nominations for the university wide presidential awards, demonstrating there are a lot of great contributions that come from this classification.
- It was noted that a lot of complaints were made about not knowing who is SPS and therefore eligible to be nominated. A representative volunteered to look into this situation within HR and get back to the Council.

Events

President Bohanon relayed that the Council does have a budget for an SPS activity and asked members to think about what that activity should be. Bohanon reported meeting with Margaret Myles and Jesse Perez. One of the questions that came out of that conversation was who could we get to sponsor/support our activity and whether that should possibly be a wine tasting event.

Those ideas were not resolved in time for FY23 other than the SPSC awards ceremony that attracted very few attendees. Bohanon suggested the council look at how we can expand moving into this fiscal year and look at when that activity should take place—winter/spring? Bohanon is hoping that perhaps this year's activity could line up with our awards but asked the council for suggestions about how we should do that; should there be other activities, recalling past councils periodically got together off campus. January or February was suggested as a good time. Bohanon will be sending out a survey around these questions.

Professional Development:

President Bohanon asked the council if we need to continue to have a professional development committee or is that being taken care of elsewhere on campus with some of the new initiatives that have come out? A former professional development committee member suggested we don't necessarily need a council committee but did propose it should be a continued agenda item so that folks have an opportunity to continue to advocate for our professional development needs and resources.

Regional Community Relations:

It was suggested that the council re-evaluate the purpose and goals of this committee. Several years ago, members of this committee reached out to engage members of the supportive professional staff with regional communities in meaningful and substantive ways. They were, at times, successful. However, those professionals were transitioned to civil service and that is where the breakdown occurred and has not been picked up again. Personal engagement was also stifled by COVID. We may want to rejuvenate this committee, focusing on how NIU professionals can make positive contributions to our regional communities.

Advocacy: Vice President O’Grady urged the continuance of this valuable committee. He asked, what are the things that SPS employees may need that is not going to be identified through any other means? O’Grady would like to see this committee continue the work they have done. President Bohanon also commented that this committee is crucial to the work that we should and want to do. This is definitely one of the committees we should keep.

c) Vacancies on University Committees

The following university committee appointments were made during the meeting:

Non-Union Faculty and Staff Grievance Panel: Cody Carter

Parking Appeals Committee: Cody Carter

Student Conduct Board: Bill Braksick

President Bohanon will be sending an email to all Supportive Professional Staff next week indicating remaining vacancies. Bohanon also suggested that council committee chairs briefly meet periodically as has been done in the past.

Announcements:

President Bohanon is expecting to have one or two guests at the September meeting and asked members to mark their calendars for an in-person meeting next month.

Adjournment:

President Bohanon thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Representatives: Please contact our SPSC Secretary, Manuel Valdez, (mvaldez2@niu.edu) and SPSC Administrative Aide, Frances Mitchell, (fmitchell@niu.edu) if you are unable to attend a meeting. An Alternate will be contacted for you.

Alternates: You are invited to attend all meetings.

*Respectfully submitted
by Administrative Aide*

*for Manuel Valdez, Secretary-Elect
Supportive Professional Staff Council*