

Supportive Professional Staff Council

Minutes – General Meeting

December 14, 2023

Teams/In Person Hybrid Meeting

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Approved January 11, 2024

Call to Order: President Bohanon called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Roll Call: Secretary Valdez called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

Members Present: Felicia Bohanon, John Boswell, Liz Guess, Margaret Myles, Candice Olagunju, Jesse Perez, Anthony Preston, Ronald Smith, Christina Sutcliffe, Manuel Valdez, Dan Wolfe

Members Excused: Bill Braksick, Cody Carter, Heath Duncan, Joe Lovelace, Tom O’Grady, Michelle Pickett, Andrew Rogers, Shannon Stoker, Lauren Teso-Warner

Guests: Ben Creed, Faculty Senate; Pulchratia Lacey, Human Resource Services

Approval of Agenda: Properly motioned and seconded (Smith/Preston); all in favor, none opposed, Agenda accepted by voice vote.

Approval of November 9, 2023, Minutes: Properly motioned and seconded (Preston/Smith) all in favor, none opposed, November minutes approved by voice vote.

University Committee Reports

Board of Trustees: Ben Creed reporting: The Trustees met December 7. They received several reports and recommendations for expenditures to replace, refresh or otherwise spend money on campus improvements which were all approved.

President Freeman presented the 2024 University goals and can be found in the Board’s packet and will be available online. There are no significant changes from years past just extensions or continuation of work or next steps in that work. No brand-new goals, but there are updates and refinements.

The Board also affirmed the awarding of two honorary doctorates: In January, to Dr. Chinary Ung, *“an award-winning composer whose work combines the traditional sounds of his Cambodian homeland with Western classical music to produce innovative, breathtaking musical compositions which have been performed the world over.”*

Tom Skilling will receive his award this fall, and he will be at graduation. Skilling was described as *“a passionate educator; a trailblazer in technological integration, an advocate for climate awareness, dedicated to his community, and has had a significant impact on future meteorologists.”* [More information about each honoree can be found beginning on page 80 of the December 7, 2023, BOT Minutes.]

The Board approved the collective bargaining agreement for the Metropolitan Alliance Police; an overview of the College of Law updates on actions that are going on there; an extended

briefing from General Counsel Perry regarding NIL, (Name, Image and Likeness) for college athletes.

Faculty Senate/University Council: Ben Creed reporting.

Update on the Provost search; It is open and accepting applications. There are opportunities to submit nominations if you have any nominations of people in your network who would be a great fit for that, share that with Ben Creed.

We received an overview presented by Bryan Perry, of how the Supreme Court's case on affirmative action, banning the use of race in admissions policies is impacting NIU. Bryan Perry, Vice President, talked through how the case impacts our institution and currently, it doesn't because we don't use race in our admissions processes, but there are future cases that may end up impacting faculty, staff and students, i.e. student grants, scholarships that use race as a criteria—is that allowable or not? Currently there is no change in practice, but there are court cases going through; it is up to us to be aware as an institution.

Also approved was the change in the academic calendar for the general election day as a “no classes” day and it was recommended that NIU be closed on election day. NIU will **not** be closed because NIU is a polling place. There will be more information from the Provost's office in January.

Student Government Association: No report.

Operating Staff Council: No report.

Vice President's Report: President Bohanon reporting:

The only report we received was from the Innovative Teaching and Learning Advisory committee: Representative Megan Woodruff reported updates on TA Awards as well as Blackboard transition and programming this semester. Discussion on QE online course designations, new open classroom weeks for spring as well as Adobe Creative Campus.

President Bohanon reminded those who are serve on a university committee, that we need to receive your report, hopefully within a week of your meeting, because this is what goes into the VP Report. If you are no longer able to serve on that committee or you're not clear about which committee you're on, please reach out to me and let me know.

Human Resource Services: Liz Guess reporting. Our focus for the remainder of this week and next, is the year-end crunch of trying to get everything done with payroll processing for year-end and appointment processing for spring. We do have some system project things we are working on as it relates to online time reporting and some additional tools that John has been fostering collaboration with some external partners. I think we will have a lot more information on that to share in the new year. Pulchratia has some information to share on some current HR position opportunities we have and updates on our comp plan.

Pulchratia Lacey: We have a couple of HR positions recently posted. John is working with us to develop an HR partner model. These two positions will be working under the leadership of Catherine Doederlein. Each will serve as a liaison between campus units and HR for any matters

related to employment. They will meet with campus units and come back to HR and gather the relevant unit within HR to help support the department supervisors and that type of thing. Those positions are currently posted on the website, so look at them and tell others. Some other things John is having us work on is developing a compensation strategy for the campus community. He is working with campus leadership and HR leaders to develop a compensation strategy that will guide how we handle and facilitate compensation practices going forward.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Committee Updates:

Advocacy: No report.

Awards: The committee created a link for nominations, requiring just a name and a sentence or two. The link is on our website, the deadline is February 16. President Bohanon encouraged council members to reach out to co-workers and encourage them to nominate themselves or someone else. She also encouraged council representatives to self-nominate. Representative Perez asked if we were settled on a time frame and what kind of budget are we working with for the awards event? Representative Wolfe responded on the timeline as far as when we get the awards figured out would be by February 1. And by the end of February/March, we would have our award winners finalized. As far as the event is concerned, we would like to have it done by March. As for the budget, we are talking about \$4200, but it is a campus event, anticipating about 400 people.

Communications & Technology: No report.

Constitution & Elections: No report.

Events: Representative Perez also gave feedback on the recent Monday Funday event that was open to operating staff. There were 32 attendees, and a great time was had by all. Everybody on the committee contributed in a major way to get this event moving and it was tricky for a Monday afternoon. They are looking forward to some other events happening in the spring. They are open to ideas if anybody wants to do something in particular, but Perez was super excited about the way everything came together. He noted it's kind of early to start talking about the events the committee is planning. They will probably try having the events later in the week, Wednesday, or Thursday so hopefully they can get that going and more information will be available soon.

Professional Development: Representative Olagunju reported the committee has not met since meeting with President Bohanon. They are looking at February rather than January to meet.

Regional Community Relations: No report.

SPSC Dependent Scholarship: Representative Ron Smith reporting. The committee met in October and plans to meet again in February. Currently there are four applicants. Representative Smith reported preparing a draft that could be sent out to SPS employees. He said we need to explore other avenues to promote our scholarships. The committee is looking to identify additional ways to get their message out. Representative Perez suggested a press release to the Northern Star in the spring. Also, working with the SGA and other student organizations. He suggested recognizing donors at the event, and perhaps giving them a little pin to wear to identify them as donors. He also suggested

encouraging employees to donate through payroll deduction. When donors come to the event, there is a personal connection to the scholarship process. President Bohanon suggested we move on getting some pins—and asked, what should they look like, etc.?

Bohanon asked the committee if they had made any inroads on the possibility of getting a QR code? Representative Perez responded that there are a couple more steps to take. President Bohanon suggested a targeted pitch about expanding the number of scholarships as a goal of our fundraising. She called for everyone to share their thoughts about having a targeted pitch in addition to a pin.

Announcements: President Bohanon reminded everyone that she sent out a link to join the first Professional Development series via Teams at 11:30 today. The topic is Sabbaticals. Bohanon hopes everyone will join for a good turnout, it will be recorded.

President Freeman will be our guest in January or February. Felicia will be reaching out to council members regarding questions for Dr. Freeman, to share with her in advance. Please send your questions to Felicia.

Regarding the January State of the University, Ben Creed discussed the approach they are taking talking about how NIU can be an innovative and inclusive institution. He said we want to make sure we highlight the work of our supportive professional staff and our operating staff members. Creed explained he does not know all the good things going on or the kinds of barriers or challenges or opportunities and would welcome our perspectives. Bohanon asked that we think of great examples or opportunities for us to improve, and to share them with her to pass on to Ben.

Adjournment: Having no further business, President Bohanon adjourned the meeting at 10:58 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
Supportive Professional Staff Council*

