

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

February 8, 2024

Teams/In Person Hybrid Meeting

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

Approved March 14, 2024

Call to Order: President Bohanon called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Roll Call: Administrative Aide called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

Members Present: Felicia Bohanon, Bill Braksick, Cody Carter, Heath Duncan, Joe Lovelace, Margaret Myles, Tom O’Grady, Jesse Perez, Michelle Pickett, Anthony Preston, Ronald Smith, Shannon Stoker, Christina Sutcliffe, Dan Wolfe.

Members Excused: Liz Guess, Andrew Rogers, Candice Olagunju, Lauren Teso-Warner, Manuel Valdez

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

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

Approval of January 11, 2024 Minutes: Properly motioned and seconded (Smith/Duncan) all in favor, none opposed, January 2024 minutes approved by voice vote.

University Committee Reports

Board of Trustees: Meets February 15, 2024

Faculty Senate: Ben Creed, President, Faculty Senate reporting: At their most recent January 24 meeting, there was a conversation about **AI** and how it can be seen as a productive tool--not to replace people--but to empower and enable. Ben will be working with Stephanie Richter and Jason Rhode from the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) where there is interest in identifying individuals from Faculty Senate who want to be involved in thinking through how shared governance can inform any sort of policies that would shape use of AI in courses and more broadly. Creed welcomed anybody from the shared governance councils who has expertise, experience or passion for thinking through AI, there are groups on campus he will be happy to connect folks to for making sure voices, perspectives, and opportunities are available to all.

The Senate had a first reading on changing the **Bylaws** governing promotion & tenure for tenured and tenure-track faculty as well as clinical and research faculty.

Ben updated the council on the **Provost Search** that received over 70 applications. Beginning next week, candidates will be on campus. [Finalist Open Forums Schedule](#) Although forums are structured for Faculty, Staff and Shared Governance groups; feel free to join the open forum that works best for your schedule.

University Council: Ben Creed, Chair, University Council reporting on Normal Road closure and the impact on Swen Parson. George Middlemist and John Heckman shared the background of the closing and engaged in a question and answer session with the Council providing some answers. Ben reported there was a commitment to have a better communication plan going forward, but no structure or outline as to what that might look like.

The Council will be following up to figure out how to have greater input and voice in the process. If there are other issues that come up, please don't hesitate to reach out and share with Felicia or Ben to make sure the right people hear and provide satisfactory responses. We don't have a good understanding about why the decision was made. The three concerns are communication, accessibility to Swen Parson and safety.

An SPSC member expressed a specific concern about the impact this closing has on their department's waste disposal schedule relative to hauling chemical waste on a state highway. Felicia asked the member to send that specific concern to her and she will make sure that issue is elevated.

Student Government Association: No report.

Operating Staff Council: No report

Vice President's Report: [February 8, 2024](#)

Human Resource Services: Pulchratia Lacey reporting: There is a new hire in payroll and another on the classification and compensation team. Darius Sias is now the assistant manager for processing students and graduate assistants. There is another opening in payroll so they are doing another round of interviews. Interviews will be conducted soon for the two partner positions with Catherine Doederlein.

Committee Updates:

Advocacy: Joe Lovelace reporting: The committee will meet next Tuesday discussing the survey and trying to get a new survey out—to also be discussed with Felicia. This might be the first comprehensive post pandemic survey that may reflect how we feel the pandemic was handled in terms of getting our jobs done. Joe has also contacted John Acardo about his perspective on the migration of SPS positions to civil service. John signaled he would be willing to share his perspectives with this council. [Joe also shared there was nothing to report from the University Benefits Committee that he and John Boswell attend.]

Awards: Christina Sutcliffe and Dan Wolfe reporting: This committee will be meeting Monday (2/12). They have collected most of the information they need and will figure out exactly how to sort through it; make a couple decisions and have it all knocked out in the next week or two. Felicia added that the council is adding certificates--as was done in the past--in addition to the awards; the deadline has been extended by one week (February 16 to 23). The date is April 3, you will be getting a calendar reminder to save the date as we want to have all our council members there.

Constitution & Elections: Tom O'Grady reporting: This committee didn't have anything to report this month, however, next month they will be in the heart of our election season so there will be a full report. Tom would like everyone to promote the benefits of serving on our SPS Council and hopefully we can get the ball rolling with our next round of elections.

Events: Our next event is Awards on April 3 bringing together Supportive Professional Staff employees in general. An announcement will be coming out relatively soon.

SPSC Dependent Scholarship: Ronald Smith reporting: The number of applications has doubled compared to last year. The entire team brainstormed and executed a lot of communications. The application period ends February 29. Ron announced they are working on two exciting initiatives related to long-term scholarship awareness and financial support. Jesse Perez spoke about the committee's outreach campaign, a tiered approach allowing any employee to sign up for a \$5 automatic, recurring payroll deduction; the next, mid-level is the Husky Club at \$15 per pay period and then the next level is for more substantial giving called the Platinum Paw. During the awards ceremony lapel pins will be given to contributors coordinated with the level of giving.

There will also be an option for retirees who make one-time gifts to receive a Legacy pin. Additionally, any employee may make a one-time donation at any time. The fund currently has a little over \$3300 with a goal of increasing funding year-over-year. The committee is also looking into ways for people to donate electronically.

Felicia added the following remarks: My personal goal is that we have a minimum of twenty-five SPS or other staff who are willing to give \$25 per month with a 12-month commitment. $(25 \times \$25) \times 12 = \7500 .

The current link on our website connects to the Foundation. We want to have a button on our webpage that will take a donor to a giving page where they can choose different modes of giving, payroll deduction or one-time donations and explains what our campaign is about. Felicia expects to have that up no later than next Friday, (2/16).

Professional Development: Felicia offered the following update: We have been working on an additional professional development opportunity for staff that will be taking place in March. It is going to be Wellness. The committee is working on that and will be sending that out relatively soon. As you know, we previously talked about that taking place between 11:30 and 12:00 for our March meeting and actually our March meeting is going to be pretty robust. We have two guests coming during our regular meeting time and then we'll move into our regular meeting and then we will have that professional development opportunity from 11:30-12:00 pm.

So as you're preparing your calendar and you are thinking about next month it's a little bit warmer today and by March it will definitely be warmer. I'm looking forward to seeing more people in person for our March meeting. I want you to think about that, come out and then also by making those contributions to our scholarship fund. Thank you for joining us today, we will be sending out those notices and looking forward to seeing you for a large [March] meeting! Thank you for the work you are doing for the Council and Supportive Professional Staff.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements:

Upcoming visiting speakers for March are President Freeman/Matt Streb; Chief Financial Officer, George Middlemist.

Adjournment: Having no further business, President Bohanon adjourned the meeting at 10:45 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*