

Supportive Professional Staff Council
Minutes
January 14, 2021 Teams Meeting
Approved February 18, 2021

Member Participants: Armstrong, Ballard, Bernoudy, Bohanon, Borg, Boswell, Boughton, Burchard, Burgin, Costello, Doederlein, Gipson, Goode, Guess, Hein, Little, Lovelace, Lundelius, Lyles, Manning, Menendez, Mewhirter, Meyer, Miesbauer, Miller, Mitchell, Myles, O’Grady, Pickett, Quider, Reynolds, Rogers, Stoker, Sutcliffe

Shared Governance Participants: Bradley Beyer, SGA; Natasha Johnson, OSC; Pulchratia Smith, HR

I. Call to Order:

President Doederlein called the meeting to order at 10.01 a.m. confirming a quorum and began recording the meeting.

II. Approval of the Agenda: Doederlein called for a motion to approve the Agenda. With no discussion, approval of the Agenda was motioned and seconded, all in favor, none opposed, one abstention, motion passed (Meyer/Mewhirter).

III. Approval of Minutes of December 10, 2020: With no discussion approval of the minutes was motioned and seconded, all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion passed (Bernoudy/Rogers).

IV. Guest Speaker: Executive Vice President and Provost, Beth Ingram
Provost Ingram thanked the Council for inviting her to share information. She expressed her appreciation for how members of the NIU community have pulled together to make the best of a difficult situation but also to think about the future and how to take some of the lessons learned over the past year and turn them into ways that we can operate better and NIU comes out stronger. Thank you for everything you do for NIU and for sticking with it and understanding that this too shall pass and we can take some lessons from it and make things better.

Ingram talked about the work NIU is doing to fulfill its Mission and Goals. She focused on Academic Excellence & Curricula Innovation and Financial Stewardship. Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness intersects with everything we do.

NIU’s central mission of providing affordable and accessible education for a young generation—a diverse group interested in pursuing the big questions of creating a better society, protecting the environment, addressing global warming, and how we operate as a democracy. Those questions span disciplines and disciplinary boundaries. Students are seeking degree programs that reflect those values.

One of Ingram’s big initiatives this year is finding ways to better support trans-disciplinary work; bringing down barriers to doing that kind of work.

Ingram asks, how do we bring groups together around the problems we face? How do we make sure voices are heard? Ingram believes SPS can play a big role in making sure that all voices are heard. Our senior leadership wants diverse voices from across campus.

The second piece of university goals Ingram addressed is easing the burden on the campus--aligning resources with our mission. People resources, physical resources, and financial resources. When resources are stretched thin, we need to make choices. What do we let go? For example, prior to COVID scheduling was de-centralized leaving many unused classrooms. Post COVID, scheduling is a collaborative, centralized process—enabling more efficient and sustainable use of classroom space.

Update: As we went into the fall, people from across the country were saying enrollments are going to be down 8-10% and there will be trouble attracting students. NIU is not in that position. We are offering what students really want to have. Ingram said she thinks we can build on that. It takes an entire campus to make sure students feel welcome and well served in our offices and in our classrooms. Ingram suggested we think about the university from a student centric perspective. Our retention rate was up as well.

NIU has two new deans: Cassandra Hill in the College of Law and Bob Brinkmann, in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Ingram reported they have hit the ground running--doing a great job and full of ideas for NIU.

Two searches are coming up this spring. Vernese Edghill-Walden, Interim Director of HR, will be launching a search for a permanent director within the next two weeks and the College of Health and Human Sciences plans to launch a search for a new dean within the next few weeks. Both searches will take place over the course of the spring. Go to Provost Ingram's website for additional searches information.

Ingram closed asking members what she can do to better support your departments, the Council and all SPS employees. Doederlein then opened the floor for questions.

Q Is there any specific NIU plan for inoculations?

A Ingram deferred to Matt Streb as the expert. She did report that NIU does not get vaccines directly. County Health Departments distribute the vaccine. NIU will participate in performing inoculations at some point. If you get a notice from the health department you are eligible for the vaccine, go ahead and get it.

Q McHenry Community College is putting their faculty in Tier II for getting the vaccine. How did they do that and will NIU do that?

A Matt can address this question. I'm sure that if Catherine sends Matt a note we can provide that information.

Q Also, does NIU have a strategy to open in the fall? We heard some talk about that. Is this true?

A Our expectation is that we will be closer to opening in the fall; it will look more normal. It will not look like fall 2019 but a significant number of classes will be face-to-face and students will be back in dorms in a more normal fashion.

Q Will returning students be required to show proof of vaccination?

A Please check with Matt on that.

Q Regarding people resources and professional development, our committee is asking what we can do to enhance what we do in terms of onboarding, orientation and even re-orientation as well as supervisor training?

A I am a strong believer in professional development. There are professional development opportunities available. One is our ability to leverage our vendors and some of the organizations we belong to, taking advantage of their specific professional development resources. Where NIU is a member of an organization, as employees of NIU you have access to their professional development resources. One of my goals is department chair training. We have not had a way of helping new department chairs step into that role.

We must plan for and we must make professional development part of what you do. I like to see valuable professional development that enhances skills toward a career ladder at NIU.

Q How do you see the future of remote working?

A I would encourage you to think about what you would like to see and start having conversations with HR and senior leadership. I think you [SPS Council and individual SPS employees] should be a voice.

Doederlein thanked Provost Ingram and assured her we will consult with Matt who is our guest speaker at our March 11, 2021 meeting.

V, Announcements

PCSW deadline extended to January 15 for Student Awards

OSC awards deadline extended to February 5

Fraudulent Unemployment Insurance claims. See conversations below

Monthly Game Lunch using Brighful web site

Liz Guess: We are aware of fraudulent unemployment claims. Sandy Hess, Payroll Supervisor, reviews all claims. She contacts the employee and notifies IDES if a claim is fraudulent. Sandy has a direct connection with IDES.

Monique Bernoudy urged anyone affected to immediately reach out to credit agencies (i.e. Experian) to freeze your credit report. This must be done by mail. You will get an FTC number instead of police report.

Some members reported excellent assistance from local police departments while others reported police unwillingness to take a report. Jeanne Meyer reminded everyone it is all right to ask a police officer “why” and it is ok to say you would like to speak to a supervisor.

VI. Committee Reports:

Advocacy: Ballard reported the committee is very close to launching their work environment survey.

Awards: Burchard reported the committee has not received any nominations and they have extended the deadline from January 18 to January 31.

Technology & Communications: No report.

Constitution & Elections: No report.

Events: Miesbauer reported a Well Being Workshop January 21 at noon.

Professional Development: We looked at the professional development ideas everyone provided and put them into categories: Advocacy, Technical Training, Cultural Competency, Benefits Enhancement, Self Care, Self Improvement, Social Engagement, Supervisory Leadership Training. We also talked about compensation for certification and sabbaticals. How do we afford professional development? Debra Boughton pointed out that the resources on the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning website are accessible by all employees. Boughton suggested we invite someone from CITL to come to an SPS meeting and give us an introductory presentation about using their platform.

Regional Community Relations: Mewhirter reported she and Scott Mooberry had a very good and robust conversation with Jennifer Groce, Community Affairs Specialist, about how we can collaborate. Right now, in the midst of all the chaos, sometimes it is really good to give back and do something for our community. We discussed certain projects to be pushed out through SPS starting with the DeKalb area and working outward. We would open up for participation by the entire campus. Jennifer is going to take our ideas back to leadership.

SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund: Goode reported the website updates are complete as well as the nomination form. The committee would like to move the January 31 deadline out to **February 12**. Goode asked if a vote is required. Doederlein responded that if the committee is comfortable with the changed deadline, there is no need for the council to vote, unless there is an objection. There was no objection.

VII. Vice President's Report:

Bohanon reported many of the university committees have not met recently. The CAEIE created two sub-committees: one to develop a framework for defining anti-racism and the second to review the Human Diversity requirement progress and process.

VIII. Unfinished Business:

Search Committee/AdHoc Committee Updates: Doederlein will be making sure SPS gets involved.

SUCSS Procedure Update: No update. A member asked, when a position shifts, what is next? This may require another layer of training.

IX. New Business: No new business.

X. University Committee Reports:

Board of Trustees: 3/18/2021

Board of Trustees Committees: 2/18/2021

Faculty Senate: 1/20/2021

Operating Staff Council: 2/4/2021 Natasha Johnson reported EAP is working on professional development and a form/newsletter option. Matt came to the OSC meeting. He had not heard any conversations about furloughs. People were very happy to hear that. Sarah Chinniah will be a guest at the February 4 OSC meeting.

Student Government Association: 1/2021 Brad Beyers reported the SGA has been working on some reforms and closing equity gaps. They hope to get these things done by the end of the semester. SGA elections are coming up soon.

University Council: 1/27/2021 University Council is going to be doing more relative to budget development. They are also looking to codify the SPS and OSC Personnel Advisors.

XI. Adjournment:

President Doederlein asked for a motion to adjourn, motioned and seconded, all in favor. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m. (Bernoudy/Bohanon)

