

Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 8, 2021

Microsoft Teams Video Conference

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Approved August 12, 2021

Member Participants: Nathan Birtell, Felicia Bohanon, Terry Borg, Debra Boughton, LaBrian Carrington, Julie Colhoff, Melanie Costello, Heath Duncan, Lupe Flores, Tawanda Gipson, Liz Guess, Joan Laurino, Laura Lundelius, Kellie Martial, Elbia Menendez, Tom O’Grady, Michelle Pickett, Jerri Reynolds, Andrew Rogers, Megan Sippel, Ronald Smith, Shannon Stoker, Jason Underwood, Manuel Valdez, Megan Woodruff

Guest Participants: Peter Chomentowski, Pulchratia Lacey, Roderic Moyer, Jeffry Royce

Voting will be by entering yes or no in the Chat Box.

I. Call to Order:

President Bohanon confirmed a quorum, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., and began recording.

II. Approval of the Agenda: Bohanon added two items to the agenda: Introductions and Return to In person Meetings. Bohanon called for a motion to approve the amended Agenda. Rogers so moved, seconded by Costello. None opposed, no abstentions, all in favor. The motion carried.

III. Approval of June 10, 2021 Minutes: Bohanon called for a motion to approve the June 10 Minutes. Gipson so moved, seconded by Pickett. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, the motion carried.

IV. Announcements:

a.) Introduction of attendees – Michelle Pickett, Tom O’Grady, Heath Duncan, Lupe Flores, Andrew Rogers, Jason Underwood, Jerri Reynolds, Joan Laurino, Julie Colhoff, LaBrian Carrington, Laura Lundelius, Liz Guess, Manuel Valdez, Megan Sippel, Megan Woodruff, Melanie Costello, Elbia Menendez, Jeffry Royce (OSC), Ronald Smith, Terry Borg, Kellie Martial, Shannon Stoker, Felicia Bohanon, Frances Mitchell.

b.) Return to in-person meetings – September

V. Committee Reports: President Bohanon asked current committee members to talk about what their committee does for the benefit of our newly elected members contemplating committee choices.

Advocacy – Borg related that this committee focuses on our SPS role in the university. Climate and our employee status was our ongoing charge from last year. The committee put together an SPS survey about how staff is coping with transitions and COVID.

Awards – Ms. Lundelius explained that this committee coordinates three different awards: (1) the Presidential Award for Excellence recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the university. Each year four recipients are honored for their accomplishments. (2) SPS Staff Awards celebrate accomplishments in specific areas, and (3) the Gary Gray Award recognizes extraordinary service to the SPS Council and SPS personnel, as well as their contributions to shared governance at NIU.

Communications & Technology – This committee promotes the council's visibility and improves how it communicates with constituents. Among other duties, the committee: Maintains a database of SPS employees; assists council members with communication tools; maintains and improves an electronic voting procedure for SPS elections.

Constitution & Elections – Mr. O'Grady related that this committee is responsible for making sure the elections go forward. This committee is very busy in the spring preparing and conducting elections. We look at our Constitution and we are always looking at how we can make it better. We are currently updating the Constitution regarding the president's term and succession. We will be presenting a change later on in the meeting. If an election is needed, we supervise that. We also try to get people to run for SPS Council positions if nominated.

Events – President Bohanon reported. Part of what this committee does is recommend activities for SPS council members. There are typically two to three events throughout the year. The committee is responsible for coming up with activities and connecting across other committees as needed.

Professional Development – Ms. Bernoudy explained that this committee takes its lead from the Council in terms of what they work on. We did a survey of the council for professional development priorities. Topping the list this year was not only opportunities for SPS staff but also for Supervisors.

Regional Community Relations – The Regional Community Relations Committee connects SPS personnel with local communities to advance the NIU mission. The committee works to reach out to the regional area to share information about SPS events; and identifies organizations or events that SPS personnel should partner with or attend.

SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund – Ms. Stoker talked about the work of the committee this past year under the leadership of Jason Goode. This committee facilitates the growth of the scholarship fund and selects recipients for the annual scholarships. Awards go to students who are dependents of employees. This year the committee expanded the eligibility requirements.

VI. Vice-President's Report: President Bohanon reported: Most of the committees do not meet during the summer--or have not met. The Committee for Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence's Human Diversity Requirement subcommittee is continuing its work over the summer. The Parking Appeals has now moved to monthly meetings. Their next meeting is July 13 so we will have the results of that meeting in the August VP report. The University Benefits Committee has not met since May.

VII. Unfinished Business

Amendment to the Constitution. Mr. O'Grady reported that the committee presented their proposed amendments to the Council in April or May but did not vote on whether to adopt them. Mr. O'Grady then presented the committee's proposed constitutional amendments to Article IV, Sections 4.2, 4.4 and Section 5.2. Following Mr. O'Grady's presentation, Council members voted.

Bohanon asked for a motion to accept the committee's proposed constitutional amendments to Article IV, Section 4.2, 4.4 and Section 5.2. Bernoudy so moved, seconded by Rogers. Twenty yes votes were heard which exceeds the 16 required for two-thirds majority. The Motion passed.

Bohanon reminded everyone they will be electing their remaining officers including the VP, Secretary and Treasurer at the next, August 12, meeting. Anyone interested in self-nominating or nominating someone else, please send an email to Mr. O'Grady (ogradyl@niu.edu) who will be taking nominations prior to the meeting. He will also be taking nominations from the floor at the August meeting. The web page with a list of Council members will be updated by July 15. Bohanon expressed her expectation for the August meeting is that all vacant positions and committees will be filled by the end of the meeting.

VIII. New Business:

Search committee updates. Bohanon has been sitting in on interviews for the interim Ombudsperson. She reported this will be an internal candidate and it is anticipated this will be filled relatively quickly.

IX. University Committee Reports: (Many of these groups are not meeting during the summer).

University Council: Peter Chomentowski, President, Faculty Senate reported he had been working with Kendall for the past two years. He reported he is currently working on plans for the first two Faculty Senate meetings in September and October.

Student Government Association: no report

Operating Staff Council: Jeffry Royce reported recent OSC officer elections and started prioritizing topics from last year, i.e. codify the Personnel Advisor positions, the faculty PA is codified; both Councils PA positions are still pilot programs for the 5th year and we want to make those permanent.

Board of Trustees: President Bohanon reported that Catherine and Kendall departures were acknowledged by the Board; a pay increase was approved by the BOT for employees not represented by a union, effective July 1. This information is also available on the BOT website. President Bohanon will be attending all of the BOT meetings and will be reporting.

Bohanon brought up the topic of in person meetings. She would like to move back starting with the August meeting and September at the latest. She asked for feedback. Peter Chomentowski remarked that FS had this conversation already and as of right now FS will be in person in September. Even the sub-committees will be meeting in person. Leadership is on the same page.

One member suggested we come back in September because August is such an extremely busy time. Another member spoke up as September being good. Bohanon then announced we will have a virtual meeting in August and move to in person meetings in September.

X. Adjournment:

President Bohanon asked for a motion to adjourn. Pickett so moved, seconded by Costello. All in favor, none opposed, the meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m. Thank you for attending.

Representatives: Please contact your alternate and the SPS Council Secretary, Tom O'Grady, and the Administrative Aide, Frances Mitchell, if you are unable to attend the meeting. Alternates: You are invited to attend all meetings.