

Supportive Professional Staff Council

Minutes

March 11, 2021 Teams Meeting

Approved April 8, 2021

Member Participants: Ballard, Borg, Boswell, Boughton, Burgin, Costello, Gipson, Guess, Hein, Lovelace, Lundelius, Lyles, Manning, Mewhirter, Meyer, Miller, Mitchell, Mooberry, Myles, O'Grady, Pickett, Reynolds, Rogers, Stoker, Tandez, Woodruff

Guests: Pat Erickson; Sarah Klaper; Roderic Moyer; Matt Streb

I. Call to Order:

President Doederlein called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., confirmed a quorum and turned on the recording.

II. Approval of the Agenda: Doederlein called for a motion to approve the Agenda as amended by adding three announcements [e, f, and g]. (Stoker/Bohanon), all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions. The amended Agenda approved.

III. Approval of February 18, 2021 Minutes: Doederlein called for a motion to approve the February Minutes. (Bernoudy/Mitchell) All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, the February 18, 2021 Minutes approved.

IV. Public Comment: Roderic Moyer expressed his appreciation of the value of this Council from his student perspective as well as praising the work of the University Ombudsperson, Sarah Klaper.

V. Guest Speaker: Dr. Matt Streb, President's Office, Chief of Staff

Dr. Streb expects fall to look similar to fall 2019, a little bit more normal depending on vaccine distribution success. NIU is working very closely with DeKalb County Health Department. The administration has been lobbying Springfield for higher education to be included in the 1b vaccine classification.

Dr. Streb passed on good news that NIU gets \$42 million from the new stimulus bill, with one-half to students, NIU will have a FY22 budget surplus. However, NIU had \$15 million in COVID costs in FY 20 and there is much work to do on campus-infrastructure, etc., so we still face some significant budget challenges. Streb relayed that Governor Pritzker announced he is holding the higher education budget flat (a good thing).

Some questions about COVID-19 followed Dr. Streb's comments:

Q: What about people who do not want the vaccine?

A: We put together a group to talk about the communication plan about concerns. The discussion is on line in Protecting the Pack/Home/Personal Health/COVID-19 Vaccine. [COVID-19 Vaccines - NIU - Protecting the Pack](#)

Q: What about students who are not eligible?

A: We are hoping everyone will be eligible by Fall.

Q: What about the new strain?

A: The vaccines seem to be doing very well against other strains. So much is unknown, it is difficult to plan. We still need surveillance. We expect wide distribution by Fall.

Comment: Regarding the difficulty of working from home, there seems to be a different way of viewing what work from home during COVID means.

Response: Working from home is not always easy. We want supervisors to be flexible; to lead with empathy and compassion. We need to change our mind set about work from home. Apply grace, compassion, and empathy.

VI. Announcements:

- a.) Patricia S. Siebrasse Administrative Professional [Award for Excellence](#) – March 19 deadline
- b.) [Applaud a Colleague](#) reminder
- c.) [Spring 2021 Training Registration](#) (includes job description training) link in live Agenda.
- d.) Diversity Dialogue Series: [The Impact of Race Related Trauma on People of Color](#), March 25, 6-8 pm link in live Agenda
- e.) COVID Vaccine e-mail confirmation – a survey of vaccine interest
- f.) Presidential Contract – opportunity for comment – at next BOT meeting – March 18
- g.) [My Pantry Express \(Northern Illinois Food Bank\)](#) link on live Agenda

Doederlein noted the departure of Debra Miller, Director, Disability Resource Center. Debra is joining Loyola University-Chicago in a similar capacity as she held at NIU. Debra thanked the group saying “it has been a great honor and pleasure to work with all of you.”

VII. Committee Reports:

Advocacy: Ballard reported the survey is in final phase and will be out soon.

Awards: Lundelius reported all the Presidential awardees have been notified. They are: Center for Student Assistance and Matt Parks each received an award for Partnership & Collaboration; Jason Rhode for Institutional Advancement and Lindsay Hatzis for Excellence in Supervision. The committee is wrapping up the other SPS awards.

Technology & Communications: No members. Catherine and Frances are available to assist.

Constitution & Elections: Tom O’Grady reported collaboration with Jon Ostenburg alleviating Jon of a few less technical tasks involved in the SPSC electronic nominating and voting process. The committee is working on a timeline.

Events: No updates.

Professional Development: Doederlein reported for Bernoudy who had to leave the meeting, that the committee is working on the priorities for professional development for SPS. An update will be provided at the April 8 Council meeting about the priorities they have identified.

Regional Community Relations: We are working to coordinate volunteer opportunities for NIU Cares Week and publishing a list of volunteer opportunities in the community.

SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund: No report today. Jason Goode will provide details in the near future. The committee is reviewing applications.

VIII. Vice President's Report: VP Bohanon reviewed highlights of an extensive report that is posted in Documents within two SharePoint groups: 2020-2021 SPSC Reps, Alts and SPSC Reps, Alts, Guests & ExOfficio.

IX. Unfinished Business:

- a.) **Search Committee/AdHoc Committee Updates:** None.
- b.) **SUCSS Procedure Update:** No updates. Encourage people to take advantage of civil service system training available through HR.

X. New Business: Constitution & Succession Planning:

Doederlein announced her position is being transitioned from SPS to OS and she cannot remain as President of the Council. Our current Vice President, Felicia Bohanon, will be completing the second year of Doederlein's two-year term. Discussion followed; a motion to allow Doederlein to serve while transitioning, ending her service on or before June 30 was brought and seconded. (Meyer/Lundelius) By voice vote, all in favor, none opposed, Doederlein abstained. Motion passed. Doederlein will be assisting Bohanon, chairing the April meeting. Felicia will be taking the gavel at the May 2021 meeting.

SPS are Faculty-No Rank: In light of the recent decision to examine the definition of "Faculty" what does this mean for SPS? What are your thoughts, is this important issue? One member expressed that it is important for SPS to continue to have that designation as a lateral term, not a hierarchal term. Doederlein agreed to take the concern to the Provost and HR for further discussion and thoughts from them on next steps.

XI. University Committee Reports:

Board of Trustees: 3/18/21; 6/18/21
Board of Trustees Committees: 5/13/21
Faculty Senate: 3/24/21; 4/21/21
University Council: 3/31/21; 4/28/21
Operating Staff Council: 4/1/21
SGA: 3/28/21

Operating Staff Council:

Johnson reported making progress on establishment of Civil Service Emergency Fund. The Council is looking forward to upcoming guest speakers, John Heckmann and Chris McCord. McCord to discuss efficiencies during this time of hiring chill. We are also working on helping people self-care and looking forward to what the future holds.

Student Government Association: Beyer reported on the SGA elections, which are in full swing. The ballot is out and a special election is planned for the fall to elect more students. The SGA is also making financial adjustments to close the equity gap and that work is expected to be done by the end of the month.

XII. Adjournment:

President Doederlein asked for a motion to adjourn, motioned and seconded, all in favor. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 10: a.m. (Bohanon/Rogers)