Northern Illinois University
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting
MINUTES
Thursday, April 12, 2012
HSC Clara Sperling Skyroom
10:00 a.m.

Present:  Pat Anderson, Nancy Apperson, Cliff Bottigliero, Karinne Bredberg, Joan Briscoe, Steve Builta, Dena Funkhouser, Lesley Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Anne Hardy, Holly Holliday-Jones, Michael Kavulic, Julia Lamb, Todd Latham, Janet Love-Moore, Debra Miller, Jonathon Ostenburg, Tris Ottolino, Scott Peska, Mark Pietrowski, Donna Smith, Michael Stang, Brian Walk, Rachel Xidis, Phil Young and Rita Yusko

Excused: Dana Gautcher, Gail Hayenga, Anne Petty-Johnson and Kathy Smith

Absent:  Ryan Harris and Salvatore Morreale

Guests:  The Honorable John Peters, President, Northern Illinois University and Tim Griffin

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Supportive Professional Staff Council President Todd Latham.

President Latham asked for additions to the agenda. With no additions, he asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was made by Ottolino and was seconded by Bottigliero. \textbf{The motion to approve the agenda was passed unanimously.}

President Latham asked for corrections to the March 8, 2012, meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Ottolino and was seconded by Anderson. \textbf{The motion to approve the meeting minutes was passed unanimously.}

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Guest Speakers

\textbf{The Honorable John Peters, President, Northern Illinois University}
On behalf of the SPS Council, President Latham welcomed President Peters to the meeting. After introductions by Council, President Latham announced President Peters had been given questions submitted by Council in advance to prepare for the meeting, but President Peters would also answer questions from the floor by Council.

President Peters thanked Council for the invitation and shared he has been busy working on protecting the “Core Benefits” of NIU employees (i.e. pensions, jobs, dependent tuition waivers and other employee benefits). He reminded Council NIU is currently owed approximately $50 million by the State of Illinois. He said he remains optimistic about NIU’s future. He then opened the floor to questions.

President Peters was asked how funds were being allocated for maintenance and new building projects. President Peters stated he understands there are lots of projects which need to be fixed, but due to the budgetary concerns most of the focus lies on first maintaining the health and safety of NIU students, faculty and staff. There are some projects which are attended to as funds become available.
President Peters was asked how he believes changes to SURS will affect NIU employees. President Peters stated nothing is certain in Springfield right now and everyone is awaiting news from downstate. He added all state university employees know how this situation was created and that all sides need to come to a fair and equitable resolution. He reminded Council the State of Illinois in 1967 took over paying the employer contribution to the retirement program.

President Peters was advised Council has many proposals awaiting response in Human Resource Services. Understanding that HR is busy working on the pension issue, the President was asked what could be done to get a timely response from HR. The President advised Council that HR has been tasked with working on the pension problem. With low staffing across campus, he asked Council to have patience and prioritize one or two projects which are most important and be relenting in working on getting answers to those first.

President Peters was asked about inequalities in shared governance across the University Councils – some have more funding and resources than others. The President asked for clarification on the concern and said he would need to review it more closely.

President Peters was asked what plans NIU has in place if there is a mass retirement of employees in May and June and how such an event might affect “Vision 2020” plans. The President suggested he is not sure there will be a mass exodus of employees, but it will be a little more than in normal years. He said NIU and each Vice President is closely watching this situation and making plans to handle work issues accordingly. In regards to the “Vision 2020” plan, he noted the plan has been embraced by the Board of Trustees and accepted as NIU’s plan, not just his vision anymore. It’s imbedded in the university’s structure and future planning.

President Peters was asked his thoughts regarding Mandatory Supervisor Training, which is one of the projects Council is hoping to implement. President Peters agrees that it should be done, but he noted with HR working on pensions and benefits and with funding concerns, training sadly is usually one of the first items pushed to a place of lower importance. He believes leadership training is imperative. He said if it is a major goal, prioritize it as such, but note that until the pension issue is resolved it might be on hold with HR for a while.

President Peters was asked what he needs from Council to assist him in his duties. He asked for open dialogue, to keep him posted on SPS priorities and to pick one project Council would like his help in completing. He said priorities should include long-term and short-term goals and advised President Latham get an updated status report from HR. President Peters concluded by stating while all public entities are feeling the fiscal crunch, NIU is better off than most. NIU is a great institution with great resources. He thanked Council for the time to meet and asked Council to keep working for SPS employees. President Latham noted he will follow-up with HR, get a status update and send Council’s prioritized list to him soon.

**Announcements**

A. **SURS Update/SUAA**

Haliczer shared SURS will be back on campus in May to meet with employees, but all appointments have already been filled.

She reminded Council there will be a second SUAA Regional Meeting on April 13, 2012, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Moraine Valley Community College. She reminded Council now is an excellent time to join the NIU Annuities Association if not already a member.

B. **CMS**

Haliczer noted all employees should have received a copy of their Benefits statement from CMS. She advised Council to review them closely to make sure the information is
correct. She added the amount employees are paying for their elected coverage as well as the amount the State of Illinois is contributing to the cost of employee coverage was included so employees could be knowledgeable of these numbers.

C. Benefits Choice
Haliczer asked Council to make note that the Benefits Choice period will begin May 1, 2012, and employees will receive a letter from Dr. Cunningham announcing any changes. As some plans are still being negotiated, there may be another Benefits Choice period later in the year. Haliczer strongly encouraged Council to remind co-workers to regularly check their GroupWise email for Benefits news and to also visit www.benefitschoice.il.gov for updates. She asked if anyone has questions, they may contact her staff for assistance.

Committees of the Council

Awards
Haliczer reported for Gautcher who was unable to attend the meeting. Haliczer shared with Council that Mollie Montgomery (HR) has sent the SPS Awards Ceremony program to print, the Presidential Award winner plaques have been received and Service Award plaques should be ready by Friday, April 13th. President Peters’ silk flower is ordered and Recognition certificates are being printed today. Press releases have been sent to campus and surrounding community news agencies. Mollie Montgomery will be sending an email to Deans/Directors/Chairpersons tomorrow. President Latham added he sent an email to all SPS encouraging supervisors to allow their SPS employees to attend the awards ceremony and asking employees to support fellow co-workers on their recognition.

Haliczer read the names of all Certificate of Recognition recipients: Terry Borg (College of Education), Kristin Brynteson (Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technology), Andrea Drott (Health Enhancement), Steve Estes (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), Missy Gillis (College of Engineering and Engineering Technology), Ray Gooden (Intercollegiate Athletics), Holly Hollliday-Jones (Housing and Dining), Michael Kavulic (Housing and Dining), Gillian King-Cargile (Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technology), Rebekah Kohli (Women’s Studies), Dara Little (Sponsored Projects), Jane Mall (College of Business), Patty Martinez (Housing and Dining), Mark McGowan (Communications and Marketing), Kevin Meyer (Media Services), Shelia Milan (Center for Access-Ability Resources), Debra Miller (Student Academic Success for the College of Education), Chris Mitchell (CHANCE Program), Scott Mooberry (Environmental Health and Safety), Al Mueller (Procurement Services), Patricia “Tris” Ottolino (College of Education), Mark Pietrowski (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), Katy Saalfeld (Office of Admission), Gilbert Sebenste (Environmental Health and Safety), Kathy Smith (Human Resource Services), Mike Stang (Housing and Dining), Connie Teaberry (Intercollegiate Athletics) and Katherine Whitelaw (Customer Support Services).

Communications
Xidis reported the Committee met to discuss updating the Council brochure and newsletter ideas. She shared after the committee clarified the purpose and target audience of the brochure, the committee decided to streamline the design to a half-page, double-sided four color document. Side one, would include the Council logo and overview. Side two, would list the committees of the Council, information about how SPS employees can get involved with Council and university committees on which SPS employees can serve. The new design should be more relevant and timeless. She will draft a design for Council to review and vote upon for the May meeting.

The Committee discussed methods to attract more employees to read the newsletter and track readers. The group decided to highlight a specific article or two which might be important to all SPS employees across campus and add a place for comments after each article to see who
responds. The next newsletter is scheduled for early Fall, so the new suggestions will be tried then. Others with suggestions are asked to submit them to Xidis.

**Constitution & Elections**
Stang reported he found a replacement for the Division 2 Alternate vacancy which was created with Angie Dreesen’s departure from Council. Jennifer Montag has agreed to fill the vacancy. Stang made a motion for Montag to fill the Division 2 Alternate vacancy. Haliczer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Stang reminded Council the Council Election are still ongoing, but voting ends Friday, April 13th. He added voting is going well and there are a lot of new employees who it seems will be able to join Council.

**Events**
Hardy announced approximately 30 employees attended the Brown Bag Panel Luncheon which was held on Wednesday, April 4th in the Holmes Student Center Diversion Lounge. She added the event was videotaped and will be an upcoming story in NIU Today. She added there were many wonderful comments and this might be an event to consider again for the future.

**Finance**
There was no report from the Finance committee.

**Legislative Issues**
There was no report from the Legislative committee.

**Technology Resources**
Ostenburg shared he has been working with Stang on the Council Elections and things are going well.

**Workplace Issues**
There was no report from the Workplace Issues committee.

**Vice President**
D. Smith asked Council to review the reports she submitted since many contain updates to concerns which had been addressed in Council meetings. She made note the Computing Facilities Advisory Committee discussed that the OneCard system will be upgraded during this summer. D. Smith questioned if this update to the OneCard system would require employees to update their current cards and might this come at a cost to employees. The Presidential Commission on Persons with Disabilities (PCPD) is continuing to spread the word on campus about Universal Design (UD) and including accommodation statements on all class syllabi. D. Smith asked any Council members who needed the accommodation statement for their courses to contact her. The Computing Facilities Advisory Committee discussed upcoming changes to some computer labs over the next couple of years. D. Smith expressed concern whether students without their own computers would have limited access to computers, but Ostenburg noted there will still be plenty of computers in the labs. She also stated and Haliczer confirmed for Council that all the Call boxes which needed to be repaired on campus are now functional again.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Wellness Fair**
President Latham thanked Hardy and Gilbert for preparing the SPS Wellness Fair table. A suggestion was made to have the SPS and Operating Staff Council (OSC) tables next to each other in the future. He also read results from the table survey asking employees
to select which projects are most important to them. The results will be discussed during the next meeting.

B. Posting Board Discussion
Due to the length of the meeting, further discussion on the posting board idea was tabled until May.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Merit Proposal
President Latham stated he hopes to have the Merit Proposal ready for submission to HR in May. Due to the length of the meeting, further discussion will be tabled until the next Council meeting.

B. Faculty and SPS Personnel Advisor
President Latham shared the Executive Committee discussed the four individuals who are under consideration for the new Faculty and SPS Personnel Advisor. Council has decided to let the new Advisor be selected, but then once installed, Council will submit a proposal requesting SPS Council have a representative on the selection committee for future advisors.

C. Appointment – The Ombudsman Search Committee
President Latham informed Council of the need to appoint a representative for the Ombudsman Search Committee. He shared this could be a long search and the person selected needs to have knowledge of NIU. He opened the floor to nominations. Ottolino nominated President Latham. Gilbert nominated D. Smith. Miller nominated Haliczer. The three nominees were asked to leave the room for discussion and vote. By a show-of-hands vote, Haliczer was selected to serve as the Council representative. Haliczer shared she is unable to attend the first meeting, so D. Smith or President Latham will attend in her absence.

D. SPS Survey Committee
Haliczer said she and her members are working on survey ideas and she will be presenting the resulting proposed survey to Council soon for input.

University Committee Reports
President Latham asked Council to review the University Committee Reports for Faculty Senate, Board of Trustees, University Council and Operating Staff Council which were submitted via email before the meeting. If anyone has questions, he asked to please email him.

Adjournment
President Latham asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Builta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Hardy. **The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.**

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary