Northern Illinois University
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting
MINUTES
Thursday, January 17, 2013
HSC Clara Sperling Skyroom
10:00 a.m.

Present: Diane Alberts, Pat Anderson, Eric Biletzky, Steve Builta, Melissa Burlingame, Mark Canaday, Alicia Czachowski, Catherine Doederlein, Dena Funkhouser, Megan Gerken, Lesley Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Gail Hayenga, Anne Hardy, Holly Holliday-Jones, Marti Jernberg, Julia Lamb, Todd Latham, Kiera Miller, Debra Miller, Ted Moen, Emily Murray, Jonathon Ostenburg, Anne Petty-Johnson, Kathy Smith, Michael Stang, Christina Sutcliffe, Brian Walk, Rachel Xidis and Rita Yusko

Excused: Dana Gautcher and Donna Smith

Absent: Cliff Bottiglieri

Guests: Sarah Klaper and Dr. Doris Macdonald

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Supportive Professional Staff Council President Todd Latham.

President Latham asked for additions to the agenda and three were made, adding “d. Venture Grants”, “e. Celebration of Southeast Asian Performing Arts” and “f. Women's Commission Awards”. He asked for other corrections or additions to the agenda. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Lamb and was seconded by Haliczer. The motion to approve the amended agenda was passed unanimously.

President Latham asked for corrections to the December 13, 2012, minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Petty-Johnson and was seconded by Biletzky. The motion to approve the December 13, 2012 minutes was passed unanimously.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Announcements
A. Insurance
Haliczer reminded Council that employees on the Health Alliance HMO need to select a new plan by January 25, 2013 or they will default to the Quality Care plan. Haliczer shared that she has forms employees can complete for the change or they can contact HR.

B. W-2 Online
K. Smith reported employees will have the option to get their W-2 online through ‘MyNIU’ and they can opt to waive the printing of the W-2. Printed W-2 can be suspended if the option is selected on ‘MyNIU’ by Friday, January 18, 2013. If not waived, employees will receive a copy in the mail.
C. Tax Update
K. Smith also shared while the country avoided the Fiscal Cliff, there are still some tax changes employees will want to be aware of – with the biggest coming in tax table changes for married and low-income employees.

D. Venture Grants
Yusko asked Council to share with fellow employees that the “2013 Venture Grants Kickoff and Teaming Event” will be held on Friday, January 25, 2013 from 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. in the Thurgood Marshall Gallery of Swen Parson Hall. She added faculty, staff and students are needed to help form teams. Anyone in need of more information can contact Bredberg in the NIU Technology Transfer Office.

E. Celebration of Southeast Asian Performing Arts
Lamb shared that as part of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, they will be hosting “A Celebration of Southeast Asian Performing Arts” on Saturday, March 2, 2013 at 8:00 p.m. in Boutell Memorial Concert Hall. She added the event is free and open to the public and will feature special guest, Malaysian pop recording artist, Amirah Ameer Ali, NIU Alumnus. Lamb shared flyers with Council and asked for assistance in helping publicize the event.

F. Women’s Commission Awards
Hardy announced the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women is now accepting nominations for the “Wilma D. Stricklin Award for the Enhancement of the Campus Climate for Women”, the “Outstanding Mentor Award” and the “Women who Make a Difference Award”. She shared the criteria and award information is available online. Nomination deadline is Friday, February 15, 2013.

Guest Speaker
President Latham welcomed Dr. Doris Macdonald, Higher Learning Commission Steering Committee Chair, to the meeting so she could provide an update on the committee’s progress. Macdonald began with an introduction and thanked those Council members who are serving on subcommittees for their participation. She noted Council representation has been extraordinary.

During her presentation she provided the following information regarding the March 3-5, 2014 site visit:
- The reason for Accreditation
- Background of the process since the last Accreditation review
- Discussion of criteria for Self-Study
- Steering committee members
- Timeline for preparation for the site visit
- Information on how employees can assist with the process

Macdonald reminded Council NIU employees can follow progress of the committee by visiting www.niu.edu/hlc. She opened the floor to questions from Council. She clarified for Council how evaluators are selected for the site visit and explained the obligation of the university to comply with recommendations made by the site visit team. With no further questions, she thanked Council again for its time and participation on the Steering subcommittees.

Committees of the Council

Awards
Holliday-Jones provided a report on the nomination and committee selection process for the SPS Presidential Award for Excellence. Before discussion began, Xidis and Burlingame were asked to leave the room since both are nominated for the award. She shared five (5)
nominations were received, but the committee believes nominations were severely impacted because HR declined the committee’s request to send the nomination email to all Deans/Directors/Chairs since the nomination article was run in ‘NIU Today’. The committee met in early January and the winners were selected. Holliday-Jones read the names of the four (4) SPS employees selected for the award. She asked for a motion to approve the winners for the SPS Presidential Award for Excellence. The motion was made by Jernberg and was seconded by Hardy. **The motion to approve the four winners for the SPS Presidential Award for Excellence was passed unanimously.** She shared the names will be submitted to President Peters for approval and then winners will be notified. Xidis and Burlingame rejoined the meeting.

Holliday-Jones next asked for a motion from Council urging HR to reconsider their position on not sending out a duplicate notification to Deans/Directors/Chairs via email if information is also included in ‘NIU Today’ as it negatively impacted the SPS Presidential Awards for Excellence nominations this year. The motion was made by Ostenburg and was seconded by K. Smith. **The motion was passed unanimously.**

Holliday-Jones concluded by asking Council to start considering nominations for Certificates of Recognition and the SPS Service Award as the Call for Nominations will be sent soon.

**Communications**
Xidis reported work on the next edition of the SPS newsletter is well underway. The goal is to have the newsletter ready by mid to late February. Xidis reviewed some of the items to be covered including SPS employee profiles. She asked if anyone has other ideas for the newsletter, to contact her or another committee member.

**Constitution & Elections**
Stang reported this month there were no changes to the SPS membership.

**Events**
Hayenga thanked Council for their participation in the December Open House event, which had about 15 – 20 employees in attendance. She shared it was a good turnout and believes Council should continue to host the event in the future.

She reported the committee has met as has come up with five tentative ideas for future events. The first idea is an informal chat with President Peters, where he can discuss his tenure at NIU. The next event is a Basketball tailgate event. The committee is going to try to schedule it around the Athletics Basketball Staff Appreciation Day event, if possible. There are plans to host a second Technology Brown Bag event, since the first one went so well. One date which is set, is for a Baseball Tailgate which will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2013. The men’s baseball game begins at 1:05 p.m. and the women’s softball game begins at 2:00 p.m. SPS will be hosting a food table between the two fields so employees can enjoy both games. For the final event, the committee would like to highlight an office and share what they do on campus. Once plans for the events are finalized Hayenga and the committee will share them with Council.

**Finance**
Funkhouser reported with current and projected cost figured into the SPS budget, at this moment Council has approximately $211.50 remaining for the year. Committees were asked to contact her with any items they may need before the end of the year.
**Legislative Issues**
President Latham reported for Bottiglio that HB6258 was not voted upon during the Lame Duck session, but asked Council to continue to watch the news and legislative resources as the bill is likely to resurface in the future.

**Technology Resources**
Ostenburg reported that in response to a request from the Events committee to research names of current employees who did not receive an email from Council for the December Open House, he found all of the employees were included on the email. He added he is still awaiting word from HR regarding his request for new SPS employee information so he can start preparing for the upcoming SPS elections.

**Workplace Issues**
Lamb reported the committee has met twice since the last meeting and had lots of items to discuss. With the death of the fraternity member during the Fall, the liability involved with being an advisor to a student group is an issue with SPS employees. There was discussion to possibly have a panel discussion on advisor liability.

There was much discussion regarding the number of employees who are “10+2” or “9+3” employees, those who are on contact to work for 9 or 10 months and then are off-contract for the other two or three each year. These employees do not qualify for benefits and many remain on these contracts for many years. There is some concern as to how many employees are on this status and how long are they expected to remain on these contracts. President Latham was asked to contact HR to request the current number of these employees.

There was discussion regarding employees returning to work in ‘Volunteer’ status and how this acts as a barrier to some seeking promotion in a department. President Latham was also asked to get a count from HR regarding the number of volunteer employees. Cross-training of employees within departments was also discussed.

Questions have been raised by some employees on how to properly report SPS employee time on the State Officials and Employee Ethics Act (SOEEA) time sheets and how the information is being used. Council were advised it is collected solely to comply with the Ethics Act and to log all time they spend completing work, including work done on weekends.

President Latham stated he is waiting on a response to his request for a count of the number of SPS employees who are losing Vacation time each month, because they report they are unable to be away from their job for long periods of time.

Petty-Johnson shared with Council she has joined the National Alliance for Mental Illness and is now recognized as a Family Support Group Facilitator. She along with another facilitator will be leading a monthly support group, beginning February 19, 2013. Meetings will be held the third Tuesday of each month in the Founders Memorial Library, Room 202, with meetings running from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. She shared this not just for the NIU community, but is open to all and she added this is a group support NOT therapy. The formal announcement should be made soon.

**SPS Dependent Scholarship (Ad Hoc)**
Hardy announced there is now over $1,000 pledged for the Scholarship, which means Council will be able to award the scholarship in May. Hardy reminded Council, once the scholarship is awarded Council will be back at $0, so donations must continue to the Scholarship fund.

Hardy said the Scholarship committee wants to request for funds to purchase stationery to solicit donations, to do a letter writing campaign and other items. The committee would like to
use the SPS Credit Union funds to purchase items from Document Services. After much
discussion several options were made for how to get the money.

- Use all the Credit Union funds once the account is closed to pay for the printing.
- Wait for the Foundation’s response to see if printing costs can come from the SPS
  Dependent Scholarship Account.
- Use the SPS Account to pay for the printing this year and then figure the cost into future
  budgets.
- Use some of the Credit Union money and some money from the SPS account to pay for
  the printing, since Council is not sure the Foundation account can be used for printing.

After further debate, Council decided to table the decision to allow Hardy to get a quote on
printing from Document Services and contact the Operating Staff Council to see how they pay
for their printing. Funkhouser is to talk to Foundation to see if printing costs can come from the
Foundation Scholarship account. Both are to return to Council next month with answers and the
subject will then come back before Council for a final decision.

Committees of the University

Vice President
D. Smith was unable to attend the meeting, President Latham asked Council to review the
reports she submitted prior to the meeting and to contact her with any questions.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Presidential Commission on the Status of Minorities (PCSM) Review
President Latham reported he received some input from members regarding the PCSM
request for the ethnic make-up of Council, but he did send what he did receive to the
PCSM. He said he also had spoken with the Operating Staff Council to see if they had
received a similar request from the PCSM and they had not.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Constitutional Amendment – SPS Scholarship Fund Committee
President Latham reminded Council he had sent a copy of the SPS Scholarship Fund
Committee Proposal for review prior to the meeting, which would move the committee
from an ad hoc to a permanent committee of the Council. He reviewed the full
amendment with Council and asked for a motion to approve the amendment. The
motion to approve the amendment was made by Doederlein and was seconded by
Anderson. The motion to approve and add the SPS Scholarship Fund Committee
to the SPS Constitution was passed unanimously.

B. Expenditure Request – SPS Scholarship Fund
The expenditure request from the SPS Scholarship Fund Committee has been tabled
until the February meeting.

C. Constitutional Amendment – Alternate Participation on SPS Council Committees
President Latham turned the floor over to Ostenburg who had another amendment to the
SPS Constitution. Ostenburg noted as standing committees of the Council has
increased, there needs to be a larger pool of potential committee members to sufficiently
populate such committees. His amendment seeks to require Council Alternates to serve
on SPS committees – thus increasing both the size and diversity of the committee
membership pool and committees will be able to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.
He added many Alternates on Council already serve on committees as they seek to be
involved. He reviewed the full amendment with Council. President Latham asked for a motion to approve the Alternate Participation amendment to the SPS Constitution. The motion to approve the amendment was made by Hardy and was seconded by Hayenga. The motion to approve the Alternate Participation on SPS Council Committees amendment to the SPS Constitution was passed unanimously. This change will not go into effect until July 2013.

D. Discussion on the Use of a Council Blackboard Section
President Latham asked Lamb to address Council regarding this discussion. Lamb noted she and others spend a lot of time working with Blackboard and wondered if it would be feasible for Council to have a group on Blackboard which might make it easier to share and house Council information. Council discussed pros and cons. It was noted it would be a significant cost each semester to have a Council group established on Blackboard. Other options such as “Google Drive” or Novell Vibe were mentioned as other online group possibilities. President Latham asked Ostenburg, Xidis, Walk and Builta to review all of the alternatives available and report back to Council.

University Committee Reports
President Latham informed Council he will have reports in February and provided Council a brief update on the status of the Presidential Search.

Adjournment
With no further business President Latham asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ostenburg made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Jernberg. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary