Northern Illinois University  
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting  
MINUTES  
Thursday, March 12, 2015  
HSC Clara Sperling Skyroom  
10:00 a.m.

Present: Diane Alberts, Eric Biletzky, Debra Boughton, Steve Builta, Ximena Burgin, Melissa Burlingame, Catherine Doederlein, Amy Flewelling, Megan Gerken, Lesley Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Sabrina Hammond, Anne Hardy, Betsy Hull, Gail Jacky, Gillian King-Cargile, Christine Kipp, Dave Lochbaum, Sandy Lopez, Janet Love-Moore, Patricia Martinez, Jeanne Meyer, Kiera Miller, Randi Napientek, Matthew Parks, Nick Piazza, Mark Pietrowski, Donna Schoenfeld, Gail Schumacher, Donna Smith, Kathy Smith, Michael Stang, Nicole Stroobants, Brian Walk, Linda Watson, and Rachel Xidis

Excused: Christina Sutcliffe

Absent: Dan House

Guests: Karen Baker, Jennifer Groce, and Sarah Klaper

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

Hardy made several additions to the agenda, under ‘Announcements’ she added, “G. Flex Time Memo”, “H. I ♥ NIU Week – March 23rd – 27th”, “I. Cards to Cultural Understanding – March 17th”, “J. House Bill 403”, “K. Week of the Young Child – April 13th – 17th”. Hardy asked for further additions to the agenda. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Builta and was seconded by Love-Moore. The motion to approve the amended agenda was passed.

Haliczer asked for corrections to the February 12, 2015 minutes. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Doederlein and was seconded by Jacky. The motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2015 meeting was passed.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Guest Speakers – Jennifer Groce and Karen Baker
Hardy introduced Jennifer Groce and Karen Baker to the Council and welcomed them to the meeting. After introductions, Groce began her presentation.

Jennifer Groce – Community Affairs
Groce began by describing her position as Director of Community Affairs. She shared the goal of the office is to enhance and enrich the connections between the university and surrounding community, thus helping the President achieve his vision of working with the community. She discussed some of the projects the office is working on and dispelled rumors on projects the university is not working on in the community. She discussed ways university departments can work with her department to promote their events in the community. The department has ensured there are university representatives and city members at the table when discussing community and university planning, which is beneficial for all sides. She shared the department is working on a website which will further help campus organizations share their events with the
community and learn more about how the department can assist them. She answered questions from Council and thanked the group for allowing her time to speak.

Karen Baker – Human Resource Services
Baker started by explaining she was present working on an initiative for Dr. Lisa Freeman regarding university release time for campus events. She explained the university plans many events which employees would like to attend, but for various reasons they are not able to attend. Common reasons employees say they are not able to attend events include:

- Unable to get away from the office.
- Employees are not encouraged to attend by the supervisor.
- Employees are told they have to use their vacation time to attend university events.
- Employees are made to feel guilty for attending university functions.

Baker explained the university administration has heard these employee concerns and was asked by Freeman to speak to the Councils to get thoughts from employees and supervisors regarding release time. Council members shared some thoughts and concerns:

- University events often occur at the same time of day, generally over the lunch hour, which some employees must work over.
- Lots of events occur at certain times of the year (i.e. April which is an extremely busy month for events.)
- Smaller departments are unable to attend to send their employees to events, when their offices need to be staffed.
- There are some employees who would attend every event, if they could.
- Release time should be given without employees needing to use vacation time.
- Any release time memo should be applicable to all employees across all classifications (faculty, SPS, Civil Service, Extra Help, Part-time, etc.).
- Employees are scared of retaliation by supervisors.
- Attending university events should be seen as a morale boost.
- Events need to be advertised as early as possible to allow time for supervisors to determine office coverage, if necessary.
- Any decision which is made for release time by the university should be done early enough to allow departments time to decide how it can allow employees to attend events.
- NIU needs to think about union employees and the rules for substitutions, specifically noting who can substitute and when. The university needs to help employees understand release time is a benefit and not the university trying to take their job. Clarify the rules for employees and supervisors.

Baker asked those with additional comments or concerns to contact Baker or Haliczer. They will gather comments and share them with Freeman before a final decision is made. Hardy thanked Groce and Baker for attending the meeting.

Haliczer joined the Council meeting, as the Board of Trustees was in closed session.

Announcements
A. PCSM Conference – March 21, 2015
Haliczer announced the PCSM is hosting a conference, “Diversity: Strengthening the Pillars of Community” on Saturday, March 21st at the NIU Naperville campus from 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration is required and Jerry Blakemore will be a speaker. More information is available online.
B. Center for Diversity Resources Conference – March 25, 2015
Haliczer shared AADR will be hosting a conference on Wednesday, March 25th in the Holmes Student Center from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Understanding some employees may not be able to attend the full day of events, registration is requested but not required.

C. Money Smart Week – April 18th – 25th
Napientek announced “Money Smart Week” will be held April 18th – 25th and continues to grow with over 106 events planned on campus and in the community. A kick-off event is planned for April 17th and the schedule of events can be found online and will be in the Daily Chronicle on April 15th. She shared the NIU Money Smart Week has been recognized federally as one of the fastest growing Money Smart Week locations.

D. SURS Retirement Counseling Sessions – April 28th & 29th
Haliczer reported SURS Retirement Counseling sessions will be held on campus April 28th and 29th. Employees who are within four years of retirement can schedule an appointment, but should call to see if there is still space available for these sessions. She added the Money Purchase Formula will be changing on January 4, 2016, if this is the more favorable calculation for employees, it was suggested to make sure to talk to SURS soon. She added the NIU Annuitants Association will be planning some retirement planning sessions later this semester.

E. President Baker’s Budget Report
Haliczer announced there is a copy of President Baker’s budget report posted in Vibe and she asked all members to review it.

F. NIU Cares Day
Stang reported Student Involvement and Leadership Development (SILD) still needs faculty and staff members to go with student groups as site leaders for “NIU Cares Day” on Saturday, April 18th. Site leaders will be needed from 7:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. and group sizes will range from 5 to 15 students. Those who do not have as much time to spare can be a volunteer to assist with the check-in process. Volunteers would need to be available from 7:45 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. More information and sign-up information can be found on the SILD website.

G. Flex Time Memo
Haliczer announced Dr. Freeman sent the memo announcing the flex time/summer hours for this year. She added all Council Presidents were consulted for input prior to the final decision being made.

H. I ♥ NIU Week – March 23rd – 27th
Hardy shared a schedule of event for “I ♥ NIU Week” which will be March 23rd – 27th.

I. Cards to Cultural Understanding
Haliczer announced there is still an opportunity to attend the “Cards to Cultural Understanding” workshop which is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17th and will be the final time it is offered with Deborah Pierce, as she will be retiring this Spring. Those interested in attending can contact Karen Smith in the HRS Center for Training and Professional Development at 753-9191 or email hrstraining@niu.edu.

J. House Bill 403
Council discussed House Bill 403 which seeks to repeal provisions that allows children of employees at state universities employed at least 7 years to receive a 50% tuition waiver. University administration and Council Presidents have sent letters to the
Governor expressing how this Bill will negatively affect revenue, recruiting, and retention efforts for state colleges and universities.

K. Week of the Young Child – April 13th – 17th
Kipp invited students, faculty, and staff to join in celebration events during the “Week of the Young Child” at the Campus Child Care Center April 13th – 17th. Guests can reserve a time to read a story to children or can also receive a tour of the center. She shared informational flyers with Council.

Committees of the Council

Awards
Gilbert reported the Awards Committee has presented all of the SPS Presidential Award for Excellence recipients and SPS Staff Award recipients with their surprise announcements. Recipients of all awards for this year were announced. SPS Presidential Award for Excellence recipients are: Patricia “Pat” Anderson (Alumni Relations), Benjamin “Ben” Bingle (CLAS Center for Non-Governmental Organization Leadership and Development (NGOLD)), Elizabeth “Betsy” Hull (College of Education – Dean’s Office), and Jennifer Kirker Priest (Anthropology Museum).

The SPS Council Outstanding Service Award recipient is Melissa Burlingame (Environmental Studies).

The SPS Award winners are: SPS Award for Advocacy - Laura H. Sala (Office of General Counsel), SPS Award for Cultural Competency - Deborah Pierce (International Affairs), SPS Award for Excellence in Supervision - Marilyn Bellert (Center for P-20 Engagement), SPS Award for Institutional Advancement - Roger Maas (Office of the Provost), and SPS Award for Partnership & Collaboration - NIU Annuitants Association.

There are 30 recipients for the Certificates of Recognition: Rebecca Babel (Student Financial Aid), Paul Baker (College of Education), Peggy Batty (Foreign Languages and Literature), Monique Bernoudy (Intercollegiate Athletics), Judy Boisen (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – Center for Secondary Science & Mathematics), Andrea Buford (Office of Sponsored Projects), Ximena Burgin (Office of Research, Evaluation, and Policy Studies), Joy Coates (Center for Black Studies), Elizabeth Colvin (Housing and Dining), Kristie Crane (Sociology), Judy Doyle (Registration & Records), Nancy Finn (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), Jeanette Gommel (Research and Innovation Partnerships), David Haas (Alumni Relations), Gail Hayenga (Office of External & Global Programs – College of Education), Gail Jacky (University Writing Center), Angela Johansson (Alumni Relations), Christine Lagattolla (Campus Recreation), Tracy Miller (Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center), Ted Moen (Office of External & Global Programs – College of Education), Jonathan Ostenburg (Information Technology), Mark Pietrowski (CLAS External Programming), Nancy Prange (College of Health and Human Sciences), Lori Propheter (NIU University Press), Christine Radtke (University Foundation), Stephanie Richter (Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center), Gail Schumacher (Literacy and Elementary Education – College of Education), Donna Smith (Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost), Connie Storey (Housing and Dining), and Stephanie Zobac (Office of Student Engagement).

The committee will be recognizing 40 SPS employees this year, the Dependent Scholarship Recipient will also be announced. She thanked everyone who nominated an employee, provided letters of support or helped in setting up surprise announcements for recipients. She thanked the Awards committee members for their time in the review of applications, deliberations and for those who were able to assist with the presentation of award letters over the past 2 weeks.
She announced the Awards committee now moves its focus to getting prepared for the Awards Ceremony, with assistance from Mollie Montgomery (HRS), which will be held on Tuesday, April 14th in the Duke Ellington Ballroom of the Holmes Student Center. The ceremony begins with a reception at 2 p.m. and the awards begin at 2:30 p.m. The Awards committee will be meeting soon to determine the roles committee members will be performing during the ceremony. Those who are interested in assisting with the ceremony are asked to contact Parks or Gilbert.

Communications
Walk reported the committee is working on the Spring newsletter, which will be ready following the Awards Ceremony in mid-April. Those with submission items were asked to send them to Xidis or Walk.

Constitution & Elections
Stang announced the Spring Election nomination process has ended. He shared a nomination count for each of the Divisions:

Division 1 - 7 nominations for 2 positions
Division 2 - 41 nominations for 4 positions
Division 3 - 7 nominations for 2 positions
Division 4 - 23 nominations for 6 positions
Division 5 - 43 nominations for 8 positions
Division 6 - 1 nomination for 2 positions

He shared the next step is to contact the nominees to determine who is interested in running. He reminded Council the Spring elections will be held April 6th – 10th.

Events
Love-Moore shared the committee is planning to recognize students during Finals week to show SPS support. The committee will continue to work on a Fall event for the students. The committee is also still working on trying to schedule a R.A.D. informational session for employees. She announced the hands-on STEM event is planned for April 7th in the Holmes Student Center with more details coming soon. The Greenhouse Tour is scheduled for March 16th and 18th and there are still a few spots remaining for those who would like to attend. She added the committee is working to plan one more “SPS Mixer” before the end of the semester.

Finance
Hull reported Council has $810 remaining for this fiscal year. She shared she met with Haliczer and Gilbert regarding Awards ceremony costs – which look to run about $500. The Awards Ceremony funds and plans for the student Finals event should use all Council funds for the year. If there are any other committees needing funds, they should contact Hull soon.

Legislative Issues
Kipp shared President Baker discussed the proposed cuts to higher education, including those to NIU. The President will be spending a great deal of time in Springfield addressing Legislators during the next few weeks. She reminded Council of House Bill 403. Hardy reminded Council if they are not members of the NIU Annuitants Association, they should consider joining.

SPS Dependent Scholarship
Hardy thanked members who have donated to the Scholarship fund and continues to welcome new donations. She shared there will be scholarship information on the SPS Wellness Fair table.
Technology Resources
Biletzky shared the latest “Lunch & Learn: Office 365” event did not have a large attendance, so the next one will likely have a new technical topic. He added he is working with Jonathon Ostenburg on the SPS election process. He reminded members “Office 365” is available for employee downloading for up to 5 devices.

Workplace Issues
Doederlein announced the committee will be sending a letter to Dr. Freeman on behalf of Council in appreciation for the university deciding to continue flex time for another summer. There was again discussion for why flex time is not available year-round.

Builta said the committee has worked on a prioritized morale list and categorized all items from Council member lists. The committee will begin sending short surveys to Council members in an effort to rank the morale list.

Committees of the University

Vice President
A. Committee Summary Report
Hardy announced she has posted her report in Vibe and added there are many committees reporting this month. She suggested all members review the information about the weight loss benefit which is available to university employees who are on the state health insurance plans which was highlighted in the UBC report.

B. University Benefits Committee (UBC) Report
There was no representative from the UBC present for the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS
A. Morale Issues
Hardy announced the Workplace Issues committee continues to work on morale concerns and all Councils still plan to meet to present joint information on university events.

B. Wellness Fair – April 1st
Gilbert reminded Council there will be an SPS table at the Wellness Fair. She will send a reminder of times members have agreed to volunteer. She asked those who have information to share to send it to her, so she knows what to include on the table.

C. SPS Emeritus Proposal Committee
Haliczer announced the committee will be meeting again soon to continue work on the proposal. The committee hopes to be able to present updated information during the April meeting.

D. SPS Leadership Skills Workshop – Planning Committee
Hardy announced she will pull the committee together soon to determine next steps. She hopes to have more to report next month.

NEW BUSINESS
A. SPS Meeting Schedule 2015- 2016
Gilbert reported she has the dates for the 2015 – 2016 meeting dates, but is still waiting to receive the formal confirmation from the Holmes Student Center. Once confirmed, she will share the dates with Council.
B. Spring Celebrations
Council was reminded next month begins a month of celebration on campus and members were reminded to view the updated ‘Celebrating Excellence’ booklet for all events.

Operating Staff Council (OSC)
There was no report from the Operating Staff Council.

University Committee Reports
Haliczer will post her committee reports in Vibe soon for review by Council.

Other Business
Hammond asked employees who are seeking to request the cellular phone stipend need to make sure to complete the request form. This form needs to be on file with the university, in case of an audit. The code employees need to use is “TEC”. She reminded Council those with a university cellphone will have their numbers published and are subject to FOIA.

Adjournment
With no further business, Hardy asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was made by Builta and was seconded by Love-Moore. The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary