Northern Illinois University  
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting  
MINUTES  
Thursday, October 11, 2012  
HSC Clara Sperling Skyroom  
10:00 a.m.


Excused: Mary Baker and Anne Petty-Johnson

Absent: None

Guests: Missy Gillis, Sarah Klaper, Cynthia Nelson, Alan Rosenbaum, Andy Small and Toni Tollerud

Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Supportive Professional Staff Council President Todd Latham.

President Latham asked for corrections or additions to the agenda. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Lamb and was seconded by Bottigliero. The motion to approve the agenda was passed unanimously.

President Latham asked for corrections to the September 13, 2012, meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Lamb and was seconded by Builta. The motion to approve the meeting minutes was passed unanimously.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Announcements

A. SURS Visit – October 30th & October 31st  
President Latham reminded Council SURS will be on campus for retirement planning appointments on Tuesday, October 30th and Wednesday, October 31st. Those employees within four years of retirement are eligible to schedule an appointment. Contact SURS for an appointment time.

B. Ethics Training  
Haliczer shared with Council the Ethics Training begins on Tuesday, October 16th and runs until Wednesday, November 14th at 5 p.m. She asked Council’s help in making sure all employees complete this state mandated training. She noted Dr. Steve Cunningham will send the official notification to all university employees the first morning of training. She advised employees to not try to take the training before the official first day, because the certificate will not count and employees will have to complete the training again.
C. State of the University Address
President Latham reminded Council President Peters will be giving his annual ‘State of the University Address’ today at 3 p.m. in the Altgeld Hall Auditorium. His speech will also be streamed live for those unable to attend.

D. Mandated Reporter Training
Haliczer shared with Council that Mandated Reporter Training information will soon be sent to all university employees. Everyone (Faculty, Staff, Civil Service, GA’s, TA’s, Extra Help, students and university volunteers) is expected to read over the Mandated Reporter Training information and send the acknowledgement form back to her in HR. She said since this information will be sent out during the Ethics Training period, she asked Council’s assistance in helping individuals differentiate between the Ethics Training and Mandated Reporter training information and the importance in completing both.

Guest Speakers

Cynthia Nelson – SPS Survey Committee
Nelson explained she and fellow SPS Survey committee members (Gillis, Peska and Haliczer) were at the meeting to collect information from Council regarding the issues which need to be reviewed and included for the upcoming SPS Survey. To facilitate the process, Nelson led Council on an experience to rank issues/problems as viewed by SPS. The following list of issues was compiled:

- Workloads
- Compensation
- Retention
- SPS Positions Changing from SPS to Civil Service
- Employee Morale
- Need for Supervisor Training
- Work Stress
- Job Descriptions (Not reflective of current duties)
- Pension/Benefits
- Lack of Job Evaluation
- Supervision
- Lack of Respect for Employees
- Public Attitude of NIU
- Hostile Work Environments

Nelson and the committee then reviewed questions from the last SPS survey to determine if they were still valid and to discuss new information which might need to be included. A question was raised why some questions/topics were of interest to Council. President Latham clarified some of the questions and their responses usually point to significant problem areas or concerns for SPS employees. These issues, which are not identifiable with employees, are shared with university administrators and/or Committee Chairs and become action items for SPS Committees, such as Workplace Issues or others.

Nelson and Haliczer thanked Council for their time. The Survey Committee will review the notes from the meeting, work on a draft of the new survey and will bring it back before Council for review. Nelson asked Council to share any additional comments with the committee and with President Latham. President Latham thanked the Survey Committee members for their time on the project.

Andy Small, Operating Staff Council President
President Latham next turned the floor over to Small. Small shared several members of the Council attended the Operating Staff Council meeting on Thursday, October 4th to discuss concerns. Small asked Council to share with him more of their concerns. Council comments for Small were:

- Civil Service searches have a limited applicant pool and limit a department’s ability to do a national search and negotiate salary.
- Civil Service job descriptions don’t always attract employees with specific skills needed for filling certain SPS positions.

- It can take a great amount of time to complete a Civil Service employment search, particularly if qualified employees are not found and departments need to keep requesting a new list to find potential employees with the proper qualifications.

- Some Civil Service testing is not reflective of the skills often required of employees in certain positions.

- Those evaluating the resumes of candidates for SPS positions don’t know the exact qualifications departments may be seeking since HR is basing inclusion on a search pool based upon state criteria. Therefore, some qualified candidates will be disqualified from a search. Departments would like more involvement and want to be able to review all applicants in a pool.

- Many SPS positions often require travel, late-evening or weekend hours, departments are concerned about how that effects positions which may now be classified as Civil Service, when they once were SPS, in terms of salary and time off.

Small and Haliczcer noted that departments can write job descriptions and highly specify those skills most desirable in new hires. President Latham stated while attending the meeting with Operating Staff Council, those in attendance learned there are ways HR can work with departments to assist with some of these concerns. Small thanked Council for their time and comments.

**Committees of the Council**

**Awards**

Gautcher shared with Council the date for next year’s SPS Awards Ceremony will be Tuesday, April 16, 2013, in the Holmes Student Center Duke Ellington Ballroom. She added the Call for Nominations for the “Supportive Professional Staff Presidential Awards for Excellence” will be announced soon. The deadline for nominations is 4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 3, 2012. Gautcher asked all Council to consider nominating deserving employees.

**Communications**

Xidis turned the floor over to D. Smith to provide an update on the SPS newsletter. D. Smith reported some committee members are still working on articles, but she hopes to have the newsletter ready by the end of the week.

**Constitution & Elections**

Stang shared that when Ryan Harris announced he was leaving Council Aaron Scissors, his Alternate, had agreed to fill Harris’ seat. Scissors announced he is leaving NIU and Morreale, the other Division 6 Alternate, wishes to remain an Alternate due to work duties. Kiera Miller has agreed to serve as Representative. Stang made a motion to accept Miller as the new Division 6 Representative. The motion was seconded by Haliczcer. **The motion to accept Miller as the new Division 6 Representative was passed unanimously.**

**Events**

Hayenga said Matthew Strub will be speaking at Noon in the Chandelier Room in Adams Hall on Tuesday, October 23, 2012, about the upcoming elections. She added plans are being finalized for a “Mobile Device Workshop – Brown Ban Lunch” for Tuesday, November 13, 2012, in the HSC Capitol Room. Details will be posted on the SPS website and shared with employees soon. She reminded Council the SPS Holiday Open House is planned for Thursday, December 13, 2012, in Altgeld Hall 315 (the BOT Meeting Room). She concluded the committee will meet soon to start working on plans for Spring events.
Finance
Funkhouser shared with Council that once the SPS Dependent Scholarship account is approved and opened then she will be able to move the money from the Credit Union into the account.

Legislative Issues
President Latham and Peska asked Council to remain mindful of the proposed addition of ‘Section 5.1 to Article XIII of the Illinois Constitution’ which will be on the November ballot for vote. The amendment would require a three-fifths (3/5) majority vote of each chamber of the General Assembly, or pension or retirement systems in order to increase a benefit under the pension or retirement system. Council was asked to share this information with fellow colleagues and to familiarize themselves with results if the amendment passes.

Technology Resources
Ostenburg reported he’s drafted a request to HR for SPS employee information. He asked for clarification if it needed to come from him or from President Latham. President Latham asked Ostenburg to forward the request to him and he would send it to HR for a response. He added he has also been working on preparing registration for upcoming events with the SPS Events committee.

Workplace Issues
Lamb said the committee completed revisions on the ‘SPS Ethics Statement’ which will be voted upon under ‘Old Business’. She thanked Council and the Workplace Issues Committee members for the assistance revising the document. She reminded Council members to review copies of their current job descriptions on record at HR to ensure it reflects employee’s current job duties.

Vice President
D. Smith asked Council to review the reports she submitted prior to the meeting. She also shared with Council the memo from Provost Alden announcing the 2013 Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Institute, May 13 – 17, 2013, in the Holmes Student Center. She clarified that faculty and staff on 12-month contracts are not eligible to receive the $1,000 stipend for attending.

SPS Dependent Scholarship (Ad Hoc)
Hardy shared Council had been sent copies of the newly revised SPS Dependent Scholarship documents to review prior to the meeting. She noted the Council wants fund to be available to give the award this spring and establishing a “Growing-to-Endowment Fund” account does not allow for that option. The agreement was re-drafted as an “Expendable Scholarship Fund”, but the fund needs to reach $1,000 by August 1, 2013, to make the $1,000 minimum award. If there is not $1,000 the funds will be awarded and the fund will be dissolved. She announced other changes to the agreement included clarifying the Undergraduate (2.5/4.0) and Graduate (3.0/4.0) G.P.A. requirements and added spouses and civil union partners as individuals who could be considered for the scholarship. The final change was adding a statement that the minimum scholarship amount distributed is $1,000 per student/per academic year. She stated once approved, the committee will next work on developing the scholarship application.

President Latham thanked the Scholarship committee for their work. He announced once Council votes to approve the creation of and signing of the scholarship agreement with Foundation, he sees the next steps occurring in three (3) phases:
- Contribution…President Latham will be the first to sign his pledge agreement and he challenges all Council to do the same, in whatever amount they can afford.
- Prepare materials to announce the scholarship to all SPS employees, asking them to also make a pledge to the fund.
- Have the SPS Council contact Alumni and retired SPS employees. (This contact would not solely be for scholarship donations, but to also invite them to attend SPS events.)

Small congratulated Council on its work to create the scholarship and stated the goal of endowment is one which can be met, as the OSC raised $20,000 in three years.

OLD BUSINESS

A. SPS Dependent Scholarship
President Latham asked for a motion to approve and sign the Expendable Scholarship Fund which will create the SPS Dependent Scholarship with NIU Foundation. The motion to approve and sign the Fund agreement was made by Love-Moore and was seconded by Yusko. **The motion to approve and sign the form creating the SPS Dependent Scholarship was passed unanimously.** Immediately following the vote, President Latham signed the Foundation agreement to create the scholarship and also signed his Scholarship pledge form.

B. Personnel Policies and Procedures for SPS
President Latham announced the ‘Personnel Policies and Procedures for SPS’ document is not ready for a vote as it is still under review. He asked for a motion to table further discussions on the document until November. The motion to table any further discussion until November was made by Haliczer and was seconded by Builta. **The motion to table discussion of the “Personnel Policies and Procedures for SPS’ document until November was passed unanimously.**

C. SPS Council Ethics Statement
President Latham thanked the Workplace Issues committee for their work on the updated ‘Statement of Professional Ethics for Members of the Supportive Professional Staff at Northern Illinois University’ document. He asked for a motion to approve the document. The motion to approve the SPS Ethics Statement was made by K. Smith and was seconded by Anderson. **The motion to approve the updated SPS Ethics Statement was passed unanimously.**

D. SPS Council Letterhead
President Latham reported to Council since the SPS Council letterhead is rarely used, he recommended not printing new letterhead, but instead getting electronic letterhead for Council. He will print copies for those who need it for committee business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business for the day’s meeting.

University Committee Reports
President Latham reminded Council he submitted his reports prior to the meeting. He provided some background on the Plus/Minus Grading System for Undergraduate students which remains under review and has been the focus of Northern Star articles.

Small thanked Council for its continued support and cooperation. He announced Operating Staff Council members will be attending the ‘15th Annual Council of Councils’ meeting at the end of the month. This annual meeting, which was started at NIU, gives Operating Staff Councils from all the state universities the opportunity to meet and discuss issues. He suggested SPS strongly consider starting something similar for other SPS/AP councils in Illinois.
He closed commending President Latham for the work he has done on behalf of SPS employees.

President Latham thanked Small for the kind words and stated it has been the joint partnership from both SPS and OSC which is helping employees. He shared both Councils (with support from Haliczer and Klaper) have been monitoring and offering support for those employees involved with the ‘Coffee Fund’ investigation. Both believe the manner in which employees have been treated during this investigation process needs to be reviewed. Both Councils are supportive of mandatory supervisor training. In the future, both will continue to work to support the interests of both SPS and Civil Service employees.

**Adjournment**
President Latham asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Hayenga made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Dickey. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary