Northern Illinois University  
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting  
MINUTES  
Thursday, October 9, 2014  
HSC Clara Sperling Skyroom  
10:00 a.m.

Present: Diane Alberts, Pat Anderson, Eric Biletzky, Karinne Bredberg, Steve Builta, Catherine Doederlein, Lesley Gilbert, Anne Hardy, Emily Hochstatter, Betsy Hull, Gail Jacky, Marti Jernberg, Christine Kipp, Sandy Lopez, Janet Love-Moore, Patricia Martinez, Kiera Miller, Matthew Parks, Nick Piazza, Mark Pietrowski, Donna Schoenfeld, Christina Sutchliffe, Brian Walk, and Rachel Xidis

Excused: Debra Boughton, Megan Gerken, Deborah Haliczer, Dan House, Jeanne Meyer, Randi Napientek, Anne Petty Johnson, Donna Smith, Kathy Smith, and Michael Stang

Absent: None

Guests: Terry Borg, Sarah Klaper, and Jay Monteiro

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Supportive Professional Staff Council Vice President Anne Hardy. She welcomed new members and guests to the meeting.

Hardy made several additions to the agenda. Under ‘Announcements’ she added, “F. Open Access Week”, “G. New NIU Website”, “H. January 2nd”, and “I. STEMfest – October 18th”. Hardy asked for further additions. 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.

Hardy asked for corrections to the September 11, 2014 minutes. One grammatical correction was made by Hardy to the first sentence of the Awards committee report. She asked if there were any additional corrections, hearing no further corrections she asked for a motion to approve the amended minutes. The motion to approve the amended minutes was made by Doederlein and was seconded by Biletzky. The motion to approve the amended minutes of the September 11, 2014 meeting was passed.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Guest Speakers – Sarah Klaper, University Ombudsperson
Hardy welcomed Klaper to the meeting. Klaper shared updated office brochures and business cards with Council. She reminded Council of four important aspects of the Ombudsperson office. The office is:
- A confidential resource
- A neutral office
- Independent of any university Division or department
- An informal office
She clarified the office does not have the authority to change rules, policies or procedures, but the office can share common concerns or offer suggestions to fix recurring problems which may result from them.

She provided statistical data from the office annual report, which only reflects numbers of visits and types of problems, since information from visits is confidential. She prefaced her remarks
by stating that since some of her requests for assistance occur outside of the office or during busy times, the numbers reported are undercounted. She reported the following:

- The office had 837 total contacts, which is up approximately 147 from 2013.
- There were 43 appointments with SPS employees.
- Major Trends/Issues:
  - Treatment by supervisors/colleagues
    - Rudeness/intimidation
    - Affected communication
  - Policy changes
    - Policies unfairly created
    - Supervisors not dealing with problem employees
  - New campus culture / expectations

Klaper noted at the heart of almost all of these issues appears to be issues with communication.

Klaper answered questions from Council and reminded everyone, there is an opportunity to evaluate her until Monday, October 27th. Information to evaluate the office is available on NIU Today. She thanked everyone for allowing her time to speak.

**Announcements**

**A. Flu Shots – October 29th**
Gilbert reminded Council there is one more day for employees to receive free flu shot on campus, Wednesday, October 29th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Holmes Student Center Capitol Room. Employees who have opted out of the university health insurance were reminded they will need to pay $38, if they wish to get the shot. If employees are unable to attend this final date, the flu shot may be obtained at the DeKalb County Health Department during regular business hours and employees will need to bring their ID and insurance card with them.

**B. Ethics Training – October 14th – November 12th**
Gilbert announced the Annual Mandatory Ethics Training for university employees begins on Tuesday, October 14th and will run until Wednesday, November 12th. Training will end at 5 p.m. on November 12th and there will be no extensions. All employees (full-time and part-time, regular and temporary faculty, staff, graduate assistants, extra help and student employees) must complete this annual online ethics training and will receive official notification the morning of October 14th with the login information. Employees who have questions regarding the ethics training can contact Karen Smith for assistance. Employees without computer access can contact Gilbert, who will be hosting computer lab sessions for students and employees. Employees who need special assistance in completing this year’s training, may contact either Karen Smith or Gilbert. She asked Council to share the word with fellow employees to make sure they complete this training.

**C. HR Center for Training and Professional Development Workshops**
Gilbert shared the HR Center for Training and Professional Development has recently finalized the schedule of training for the Fall and everyone should have received a copy of the schedule in the mail. The schedule is also available on the HRS website under training. More sessions are in the works for this semester related to Wellness topics. To register for any of this semester’s workshops please contact the office at 753-6039 or via email at hrstraining@niu.edu.

**D. Report on Bus Safety Memo**
Hardy reminded Council that during the last meeting Council decided to send a memo to Bill Nicklas regarding the safety concerns when all of the Huskie Line busses were
moved to the East side of the Student Center. The memo was sent and Nicklas immediately responded to say the decision had already been made to move most of the busses back to the bus turnaround. Only the #6 and #7 busses, which go to downtown DeKalb, remain on the East side of the Student Center. He thanked Council for its concern and appreciated the memo.

It was announced the city will be meeting with NIU officials to discuss possibly closing Normal Road on campus to city traffic, leaving it open only to busses, university service vehicles and emergency vehicles. Hardy said members with concerns regarding this closure can contact her or Haliczer.

E. PLUS Task Force Report
Hardy shared D. Smith wanted to remind everyone they can still send their comments about the PLUS general education proposal through tomorrow. The website is www.niu.edu/PLUS. If anyone has any questions, they can contact D. Smith for more information.

F. Open Access Week
Hardy reported that during the week of Oct. 20th, NIU will present a series of lectures, panel discussions and other events to celebrate “International Open Access Week 2014”. Now in its eighth year, “International Open Access Week” highlights the potential benefits that open access can bring to scholarly publishing and research. All events are free and open to the public.

G. New NIU Website
Hardy announced NIU had unveiled a new website and new tagline. She congratulated Walk, who was recognized for his work on the project. Walk said it was a quick project, which was unveiled before the original launch date and the response has been positive.

H. January 2nd
Hardy announced the University Council voted and approved an extension of the 2014 university winter holiday closure schedule to include Friday, January 2, 2015, as a Scheduled Closure Day. She reminded Council that means SPS employees will have to use vacation time for the day or can choose to take the day without pay, but HRS must be contacted in advance. For those with Civil Service employees, they will also need to make sure they have vacation time accrued for the day, or can contact HR Payroll if they need to borrow from future time, or they can also take the day without pay, but this must also be approved with HRS in advance.

I. STEMfest – October 18th
Gilbert said King-Cargile wanted to remind Council ‘STEMfest’ will be held at the Convocation Center on Saturday, October 18th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will activities and family fun for everyone, she hopes to members there. More information is available online at stemfest.niu.edu/stemfest/.

Committees of the Council

Awards
Parks announced he and Gilbert met with Gautcher to work on the transitioning of Awards processes and part of this included a review of all the awards nomination forms for the year. Once forms were finalized in this smaller group, the full committee also reviewed the forms. The call for nominations for the ‘Presidential Supportive Professional Staff Award for Excellence’ and ‘SPS Staff Awards’ have been submitted for email distribution to all university leadership and SPS employees and will be announced in ‘NIU Today’. Gilbert shared copies of the
nomination forms with all Council members and Parks announced the deadline for nominations for both awards is December 1st. He reported information was submitted to Xidis and Walk to update the Awards information on the SPS webpage and he thanked them for the quick update of materials and information. The committee also submitted a proposal to the Finance committee for $176 to update and create a new perpetual plaque to continue to hang in the Holmes Student Center recognizing all the SPS Service Award recipients, which had not been updated since 2007. The new plaque will have space to recognize recipients through 2023. He announced the proposal was approved by the Finance committee and the Awards committee thanks them for their timely response.

**Communications**
Walk reported the committee has been busy making webpage updates and is in the process of working on the Fall edition of the SPS newsletter. It is expected the next edition will be ready by early November for distribution. Those with ideas were asked to submit information to the committee as soon as possible to be considered for inclusion.

**Constitution & Elections**
Jacky reported there were a few more changes which needed to be made to the Council roster, as Duffy has left the university. Since Jernberg was Duffy’s alternate, she has agreed to move to the Representative position. With no candidates left from Division 4 from the Spring 2014 elections, the committee went back to the Spring 2013 elections for replacements, in order to avoid a special election. Jacky made a motion to approve moving Jernberg to the Representative position to replace Duffy, extending Stroobants Alternate status for one additional year (until 2016) to serve as Alternate to Jernberg, and to approve Amy Flewelling (the next person to serve from the 2013 elections) to complete Stroobants’ original Alternate term which will end in 2015. The motion was seconded by Lopez. **The motion to approve Jernberg’s appointment to Representative, extending Stroobants’ Alternate term until 2016 and appointing Flewelling to complete Stroobants’ Alternate term which ends in 2015 was passed unanimously.**

**Events**
Love-Moore announced 25 SPS employees and friends attended the “SPS Monthly Mixer” at “PJ’s Courthouse Tavern” in September. The committee has decided to not host a football tailgating event this Fall, but will consider it again in the future. She said the committee is still working with “Meals on Wheels” to try to schedule a service day and is looking at some dates in November. The next “Lunch and Learn” event is scheduled for Thursday, October 23rd and Biletzky will update Council on that in his report. The “SPS Holiday Social” is planned for Monday, December 15th in Altgeld Hall, with more information to be shared once finalized. She added there is tentative date for a tour of the DeKalb Police Station for Tuesday, October 28th from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. and more information will be sent via email soon. She said the committee has formed a small focus group to work on planning some student-centered activities. For anyone who has any ideas for events, please feel free to share them with her or Burlingame.

**Finance**
Hull reported the committee met and did approve the $176 request from the Awards committee to update the SPS Service Plaque. She added the committee is trying to determine the funding source for the SPS Holiday event and she asked other committees seeking funds to please contact her soon. At this point, the Council has $865 uncommitted funds remaining for this fiscal year.

**Legislative Issues**
Kipp and Schoenfeld had no report for this month.
**SPS Dependent Scholarship**
Hardy reported there is $3,343 in the SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund account, thanks to a recent very generous donation. She reminded members the application process is open and information is available online. The scholarship application deadline is January 15th.

**Technology Resources**
Biletzky announced the date for the “Lunch & Learn: Office 365” event has been moved from Tuesday, October 21st to Thursday, October 23rd and will now be held in the HSC Regency Room. This is expected to be a hands-on event as employees will be able to bring their own technology and test different aspects of the program. More information will be emailed to all university SPS employees shortly. If there are questions before the event, please contact Biletzky.

**Workplace Issues**
Petty Johnson was unable to attend the meeting, there was no report.

**Committees of the University**

**Vice President**
Hardy announced her report was posted to Vibe and she asked everyone to review the material and to contact her with any questions.

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. **Cellular Service Stipend Policy – Survey Update (Parks)**
   Parks provided an update on information he gathered from the cellular service stipend survey results from Council members and SPS employees. He reported 27 Council members completed the survey and over 250 SPS employees completed the survey as well, when it was accidentally sent to all SPS employees. He shared the results show employees overwhelmingly seem to support this plan and the different tier levels. He said there were some concerns which he and the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) will continue to work on and there are some ethics issues which he is also researching. The plan still needs to be shared with a few more Councils and then will go back to the Cabinet for another review. He will update Council on plans in the future.

B. **Guest Speakers for 2014**
   Hardy announced Brett Coryell will be the guest speaker for the November meeting. She added Haliczer will continue to work down the list of names which Council generated in July for future guest speakers. If members have additional names they would like to add to the list, please send suggestion to Haliczer.

C. **Employee Morale – Continued Group Work**
   Hardy broke the Council into groups to continue brainstorming ways to address employee morale on campus. The day’s focus was to come up with action items the Council can begin working on immediately to begin to address these concerns. Four group leaders (Alberts, Love-Moore, Piazza and Sutcliffe) facilitated group discussions. At the end of 25 minutes the group reconvened to share ideas. Gilbert will compile all group responses and post the final document in the November Vibe meeting folder. Hardy added the information will also be discussed during the Executive Committee meeting and Council will decide which actions to begin during the November 13th Council meeting. She thanked everyone for their work on this project. Terry Borg, Chair of the University Benefits Committee, requested a copy of the compiled list as morale is a topic the committee is also working to address.
NEW BUSINESS
A. University Strategic Plan
Hardy shared the university is working on a new strategic plan and as there is more information to share, Council will be informed.

Operating Staff Council (OSC)
Monteiro reported the Operating Staff Personnel Advisor (a position similar to the Faculty & SPS Personnel Advisor) has been approved and the Council has established a group to work on developing a position description.

University Committee Reports
Hardy shared Haliczer’s monthly reports are available in Vibe.

Adjournment
With no further business, Hardy asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was made by Jernberg and was seconded by Lopez. The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary