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

Present: Diane Alberts, Paul Baker, Eric Biletzky, Karinne Bredberg, Steve Builta, Melissa Burlingame, Edith Cowan, Catherine Doederlein, Dana Gautcher, Lesley Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Sabrina Hammond, Anne Hardy, Emily Hochstatter, Betsy Hull, Gail Jacky, Christine Kipp, Gillian King-Cargile, Dave Lochbaum, Sandy Lopez, Janet Love-Moore, Linda Manning, Patricia Martinez, Margaret Myles, Randi Napientek, Jonathon Ostenburg, Tom Parisi, Matthew Parks, Nick Piazza, Mark Pietrowski, Jennifer Salmon, Donna Schoenfeld, Gail Schumacher, Kathy Smith, Christina Sutcliffe, Erica Wade, Brian Walk, Shannon Wapole, Linda Watson, and Rachel Xidis

Excused: Pat Anderson, Debra Boughton, Nicole Holland, and Michael Stang

Absent: None

Guests: President Doug Baker, Sarah Klaper, Greg Long, and Holly Nicholson

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

Haliczer made three additions to the agenda, under ‘Announcements’ she added, “C. SURS Retirement Seminars”, “D. NIU “Make a Difference Day” – Saturday, October 3rd”, and “E. Hunger Action Month”. Haliczer 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 Love-Moore and was seconded by Hardy. The motion to approve the amended agenda was passed.

Haliczer asked for corrections to the August 13, 2015 minutes. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Lopez and was seconded by Martinez. The motion to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2015 meeting was passed.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Guest Speakers – President Doug Baker
Haliczer welcomed Baker back to Council. Baker thanked Council for the opportunity to speak again and to provide university updates for members. He added Haliczer had supplied questions to him before the university Town Hall which he was unable to answer, but would try to answer as many as possible during the meeting.

He shared he’d recently met with all the Council Presidents (SPS, OSC, Faculty Senate, and Student Association) to talk about budget concerns. He shared how everyone is waiting for a decision to be made regarding a state budget. He discussed how the university is being affected by this delay and things the university is doing to assist employees. He also talked about some of the things the Councils and employees can do to share their concerns with their representatives. Haliczer shared the Council Presidents will be working on sending another joint letter to Springfield and discussed they are meeting with Mike Mann, Assistant Vice President of Budget and Finance and our liaison downstate, as well as the Ethics office for
guidance on sending group and individual letters to legislators. All Council Presidents will be sharing this information with constituent employees once confirmed.

Baker discussed the “10 Day Count” numbers, which were just released. He shared that while numbers are down slightly again, retention numbers have improved and shared they’ve gone up 6% in the past two years. He talked about some of the work being done to continue to improve enrollment and retention numbers. He shared International student numbers have increased 43% over the past two years. He said the hard work from all offices is starting to come together and the turnaround is beginning, but will continue to take time.

Baker answered several of the questions which were submitted via Council. He discussed how he is continuing to work to improve employee morale by sharing as much information with employees as possible. He talked about the work being done for Program Prioritization. Members shared staffing concerns and how it is affecting students and he said he will continue to look at filling vacancies as the budget allows. He also clarified for members the difference between the Capital budget monies and Operational budget and how certain funds can be only used for certain items. He again thanked Council for the opportunity to meet and asked those with additional questions or suggestions to email him.

Announcements

A. NIU Flu Shots – September 30th and October 20th
Haliczer reminded Council flu shots will be offered on Wednesday, September 30th in the Regency Room and October 20th in the Duke Ellington Ballroom, both in the Holmes Student Center. Shots are free for those who are covered under the State of Illinois Health insurance plans. The shots will be available both days from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Those with questions were asked to contact the Employee Assistance Program at 753-9191.

B. Extra Help (and Student Workers) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
Haliczer shared changes in hours Extra Help employees and student workers can work have been put in place, due to the Affordable Care Act. Members discussed some of the affects they are seeing across campus and talked about ways to assist offices who need assistance due to limited employee hours.

C. SURS Retirement Seminars
Haliczer shared with members information about how employees can make an appointment to meet with SURS representatives since the Fall campus appointments were quickly filled. She reminded Council SURS also has offices in Naperville and Champaign to meet with those employees thinking about retirement.

D. NIU “Make a Difference Day” – Saturday, October 3rd
Haliczer shared a flyer with Council members announcing the NIU “Make a Difference Day” which is scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd. The event is again being sponsored by the Student Involvement and Leadership Development (SILD) office. Those with questions about the event, were directed to visit the SILS webpage http://www.niu.edu/studentinvolvement/Community_Service/Make a DifferenceDay.shtml.

E. Hunger Action Month
Haliczer announced September is “Hunger Action Month”. As part of the month of events, there will be a panel discussion (including Council’s Burlingame) to talk about facts about hunger locally and worldwide, to give participants a sense of the scope of hunger needs, as well as the help available for hungry people worldwide. The panel event will be held on Wednesday, September 30th from 4 – 6:00 p.m. in the Wirtz Hall
Committees of the Council

Awards
Hochstatter reported she and Gillis met with Gilbert to work on the transition and planning for the year. She and Gillis are also working with the President’s Office and Human Resources to plan this year’s Awards Ceremony event, which they hope to have a date for shortly. They are working on updating the applications for this year, so they can open the Fall Awards nomination period in October. They will have more information during the October meeting.

Communications
Xidis shared she and Walk are continuing to work on webpage updates and sending out emails for the Events committee. She said all of the Events information and new members should be on the SPS webpage now, as they have been working to get them all posted. They are working on the Fall SPS Newsletter, so those with information they would like to include should contact Walk or Xidis soon. They would like to have all topics in by Friday, October 9th. She thanked everyone for their participation in the Council group photograph before the meeting.

Constitution & Elections
Jacky reported the committee is reviewing information to assist with the SPS redistribution project. Their goal is to have some information ready by December for Council, so changes could be ready in time for the Spring SPS Council elections.

She announced one more SPS employee, Hammond, has agreed to serve on this year’s SPS Grievance Committee. Jacky asked for a motion to approve Hammond to the committee. Love-Moore made the motion, which was seconded by Walk, to approve Hammond for the SPS Grievance Committee. **Council voted, with Hammond abstaining from the vote, and Hammond was approved for the SPS Grievance Committee.**

Events
Burlingame announced several of the events planned for the committee for this semester. Today and again on Monday, September 28th, STEM Outreach will be working with the committee to make ice cream from liquid nitrogen from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. in the MLK Commons. Thursday, September 24th, the committee is sponsoring “Let’s Go Canoeing” at the East Lagoon from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. There will be a “Downtown DeKalb Mural & “Establishment” Walk” on Monday, September 28th from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. FCNS students will be offering a “Food Demonstration: The Fall Harvest” on Tuesday, November 3rd from 4 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. in Wirtz Hall 104. There will be a “Food and Football Mixer” on Wednesday, November 11th from 7 p.m. – 10 p.m. at Fatty’s to watch the Huskies take on Buffalo. There will be another tour of the Biological Sciences Greenhouse on Tuesday, December 1st and Wednesday, December 2nd from 12:10 p.m. – 12:50 p.m. in Montgomery Hall 215 A. The semester will wind down with the “SPS Holiday Social” which will be hosted in the NIU Anthropology Museum on Monday, December 14th from 3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. She said the committee is also working to plan Brown Bag Tech Talk in October and may try to schedule a Halloween-themed mixer for October. She added there will be fewer events for the Spring semester. Information about all of the events, along with registration information is available on the SPS webpage. She thanked Brian and Rachel for the assistance in getting the information posted.

Finance
Hull reported the Council has a budget and noted as the Board of Trustees has now done, the Council will continue with the removal of snacks from the meetings, but will still provide water.
She noted the Council still has about $2,000 remaining in the budget, so those committees which will need funding should contact her committee soon.

**Legislative Issues**
Schoenfeld reported there is no budget yet and everyone is waiting on news. She reported the committee will be meeting soon and they are going to work on is setting committee goals for the year.

**SPS Dependent Scholarship**
Hardy announced there is $3,903 in the SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund. She is hoping to meet with the Foundation soon to talk about inclusion in this Fall’s donation letters. She reminded members the goal of the committee is to raise $25,000 so the scholarship can become endowed. If every SPS members donated just $30 this year, the endowment goal would be met by July. She reminded members the forms to make a donation are available online and that donations can also be made payroll deduction.

**Technology Resources**
Walk reported the committee has met and is working on goals for the year. They also reviewed their mission and goals for the committee - to keep Council current on the latest technology resources available. The committee is also looking to schedule two or three lunch bag presentations this year, with the first tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 15th. He thanked all members for the suggestions and comments which were provided to the committee during the last meeting, as this will help them in planning for this year.

**Workplace Issues**
Builta talked briefly about items which were covered during the last meeting of the committee. They reviewed items which were projects they worked on last year and have started working on a list of prioritized events for this year. Some of the items for this year include:

* Reviewing and getting a status update on the SPS Handbook and trying to become a part of the campus review process in the future. (Haliczer provided an update on the status of the SPS Handbook and explained why it was taken down and expectation of when it should be available again.)
* Getting an update on the number of Temporary SPS on campus and concerns they may be facing.
* The Affordable Care Act (ACA) and how it is affecting employees.
* Review the NIU Smoking Policy and affects it may have on employees.

Builta asked if Council members or other SPS employees have concerns which they would like the committee to address, to please send the information to either he, Doederlein or any other Workplace Issues committee member.

**Committees of the University**

**Vice President**

A. **Committee Summary Report**

Builta reported he has reached out to all the SPS employees who have been appointed to a university committee reminding them they need to provide a committee report for Council. Since many university committees have still not started meeting he hopes to be able to provide a report next month.

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. **Campus Town Hall Meeting – September 2nd**
Haliczer asked if members had any thoughts or concerns regarding the President’s Town Hall event. There were no comments or concerns addressed, but many members said they did attend the event or watched it online.

B. Program Prioritization Update
Haliczer asked Bredberg for a brief update on Program Prioritization plans. She shared the Administrative and Academic Task Force members went through training last week and as part of it all were asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. She noted the information which can be shared with employees will be listed on the Program Prioritization website and directed members to that page for more updates in the future.

C. SPS Leadership Skills Workshop – Planning Committee
Hardy thanked Brian and Rachel for sending out the SPS Leadership Skill Workshop information to all the SPS employees. She shared the response has been overwhelming as 124 employees have signed up for most or all four workshops in the series for this Fall. She said participation has come from SPS, Civil Service, and Faculty members, so the membership is quite diverse. The first session will be held on September 22nd with Haliczer and Gilbert providing the workshop. Those who are still interested in attending, but were unable to register, can contact Hardy who will add them to the waiting list.

D. Provost’s Task Force on SPS Policies
Haliczer shared the Provost’s Task Force is still reviewing documents and is waiting on some revisions. There will be more of an update on the status next month.

NEW BUSINESS
A. SPSC Annual Report (Approval)
Haliczer noted she originally wanted to get approval for the Council’s Annual Report, but needs to repost it due to some errors in the copy on Vibe. She asks everyone to review the newly posted document before the next meeting, so approval can be made during the October meeting.

B. Proposed Speakers for 2015 – 2016
Haliczer again opened the floor to suggestions for speakers to come to Council during this year, names mentioned during the meeting included: Mike Mann, Vernese Edghill-Walden (new Chief Diversity Officer), Dani Rollins (Director of Admissions), Catherine Squires (Foundation) and Board of Trustees Chair, Marc Strauss. Council decided to invite Mann to the next meeting to provide an update on what is happening in Springfield. Haliczer said she will contact him and see if he can attend the meeting. She asked those who have additional names for speakers to contact her.

C. Discussion: Council Priorities for 2015 - 2016
Haliczer asked all members to break into groups to talk about what should be Council priorities for this year. After a few minutes of discussion each group presented their thoughts and below is the compiled list of items:

- Council needs to determine how the group can better communicate with employees to affect change on campus.
- Address concerns regarding whether or not the upper administration is listening to university employees.
- Employees want to learn about what others on Council do within their departments. (How can we support each other, until we know and understand what each of us does on campus?)
- Council should discuss how SPS can be part of making efficiencies across campus – we SPS can be problem-solvers.
• Notice that morale is still a concern on campus and continue to work on ways to improve it.
• Address concerns about accessibility.
• Make sure the university continues to share information with employees on major programs, like Program Prioritization, which affect all employees.
• Find ways to continue to help promote the SPS Council across campus – use more social media.
• Continue to highlight the SPS Dependent Scholarship to employees and make it easy for them to make a donation.
• Highlight where there is a need on campus within departments and teach employees how to lobby to our superiors for assistance.
• Work on rumor control on and off campus.

Haliczer thanked members for their participation in this event and asked those with other priorities for this year to send them to her.

Operating Staff Council (OSC)
There was no report this month, due to the length of the meeting.

Faculty Senate/University Council
Long discussed how all of the Councils working together to address legislators regarding the budget crisis with letters continues to be an important task. He thinks this working together builds and supports the voice of all employees and students.

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

Adjournment
Haliczer asked for a motion to adjourn the Council meeting. The motion to adjourn was made by Smith and was seconded by Love-Moore. The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary