Northern Illinois University
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting
MINUTES
Thursday, September 11, 2014
HSC Clara Sperling Skyroom
10:00 a.m.

Present: Diane Alberts, Eric Biletzky, Debra Boughton, Karinne Bredberg, Steve Builta, Melissa Burlingame, Catherine Doederlein, Kristin Duffy, Lesley Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Sabrina Hammond, Anne Hardy, Dan House, Betsy Hull, Gail Jacky, Gillian King-Cargile, Christine Kipp, Victoria Livingston, Janet Love-Moore, Jeanne Meyer, Debra Miller, Randi Napientek, Matthew Parks, Nick Piazza, Donna Schoenfeld, Gail Schumacher, Donna Smith, Kathy Smith, Michael Stang, Nicole Stroobants, Christina Sutcliffe, Brian Walk, and Rachel Xidis

Excused: Megan Gerken, Sandy Lopez, and Anne Petty Johnson

Absent: None

Guests: Sarah Klaper, Jay Monteiro, and Bill Pitney

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 9:58 a.m. by Supportive Professional Staff Council President Deborah Haliczer. She thanked everyone for arriving early for the Council photo and shared members who were unable to attend will have their name listed with the picture.

Haliczer made several additions to the agenda. Under ‘Announcements’ she added, “G. DCFS Foster Parent Search”, “H. Gender & Sexuality Resource Center – Clothing Drive”, “I. Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Fall Events”, “J. Telephony”, “K. NIU Student Food Pantry”, “L. STEMfest”, and moved Park’s presentation on the “Cellular Service Stipend Policy” to the final item under announcements. Haliczer 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 Stang and was seconded by D. Miller. **The motion to approve the amended agenda was passed.**

Haliczer asked for corrections to the August 14, 2014 minutes. One correction was made by Haliczer, removing the “announced” in the “Guest Speakers” opening sentence. She asked if there were any additional corrections, hearing none she asked for a motion to approve the amended minutes. The motion to approve the amended minutes was made by Meyer and was seconded by Jacky. **The motion to approve them amended minutes of the August 14, 2014 meeting was passed.**

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Guest Speakers
Haliczer announced there was no guest speaker for the meeting, but reminded Council Sarah Klaper, Ombudsperson, will be the guest for the October meeting.

Announcements

A. Move-In and Welcome Days Recap
Stang shared the Move-In and Welcome Days activities went well and invited Council members to share thoughts or suggestions with him as the committee will be meeting to review events soon. A member commented lots of staff were seen assisting families and students during the first few days of the semester. Concern was raised about
student safety with many students walking around with earbuds in their ears or texting on cellphones and not being mindful of cars, service vehicles, or buses around them.

**B. Flu Shots**
Haliczer reminded Council there are two dates for employee flu shots. The first date is Thursday, September 25th at the HSC Regency Room and the second date is Wednesday, October 29th at the HSC Duke Ellington Ballroom/Capitol Room. The time for both will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Employees on one of the university health plans or retirees with state health insurance are eligible for the free shots. Those on Medicare need to bring their Medicare card. Employees who have opted-out of the university health insurance will need to pay for the shot, which will cost $38. If employees are unable to make either of the two NIU flu clinic dates, the flu shot may be obtained at the DeKalb County Health Department during regular hours and the employee will need to present their ID and insurance card. Students and Graduate Assistants should receive their flu shots at the NIU Health Services.

**C. Office of the Ombudsperson 45th Anniversary**
Haliczer congratulated Sarah Klaper, Ombudsperson, on the 45th Anniversary reception of the NIU Ombudsperson office, which is the oldest office in North America. Klaper thanked all Council members who helped the office celebrate during their reception in the HSC Gallery Lounge on Tuesday, September 9th. Klaper thanked Bertrand J. Simpson, Jr., Esq. and Tim Griffin, past Ombudspersons, who helped contribute to the anniversary celebration and office video which will be playing all week in the HSC Gallery Lounge.

**D. Smoke-Free Illinois Campus – Advance Planning**
Haliczer announced all Illinois campuses will be going smoke-free as of July, 1, 2015. In preparation for this change, the university is forming a steering committee which will be looking at the law to determine how it will be implemented and enforced on campus. As more details for campus are clarified, plans will be shared with the entire NIU community.

**E. Ethics Training – October 14 – November 12**
Haliczer shared the Annual Ethics Training will begin on Tuesday, October 14th and will run until Wednesday, November 12th. More information will be shared next month.

**F. NIU Enrollment Figures**
Haliczer announced the 10-day count for the university was just announced. NIU predicted a drop of about 700 students for the year, but the numbers do not appear to be that bad. There was also an increase in international students and the university retained more Freshman students who returned as Sophomores this year. This is a good sign that retention efforts are starting to pay off.

**G. DCFS Foster Parent Search**
Haliczer passed information from the DeKalb county DCFS office which is in need of families who would be willing to become licensed foster families. Contact information and more details were shared with Council members.

**H. Gender & Sexuality Resource Center – Clothing Drive**
Haliczer shared the Gender & Sexuality Resource Center will be hosting their annual Clothing Expo on October 16th, where students who need gently used every day wear or business clothing to assist with job interviews can select items. Those who are interested in donating gently-used items may drop off items at the Center or can contact the Center to schedule a pick-up.
I. **Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Fall Events**
Haliczer shared with Council members upcoming events which are being planned by Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies and highlighted the “Women in STEM (WISTEM) Brown Bag Lunch” which is planned for Thursday, September 18th at 12 p.m. She asked everyone to review all scheduled events.

J. **Telephony**
Haliczer asked Hammond to discuss the open forum for employees to discuss changes to the telephone system on campus. Hammond announced there is an open forum planned for today at 2:30 p.m. in the Holmes Student Center Illinois Room to discuss how employees use the phones, discuss some options being considered in the future and discuss “unified communications”. She shared this will be the first of many such open sessions to discuss telephone changes and she invites everyone to come and share their ideas so the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) can determine what is best for the university.

K. **NIU Student Food Pantry**
Haliczer shared the Huskies Student Food Pantry is now open in the Grace Place Campus Ministry Center on the first and third Thursday of every month from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. They accept non-perishable food items and donations are also welcome. Items can be dropped off at Career Services or at Grace Place.

L. **STEMfest**
King-Cargile announced STEMfest will be held on Saturday, October 18th at the Convocation Center and lots of experiments and fun for the whole family. For more details, she asked everyone to visit the website at [http://stemfest.niu.edu/stemfest/](http://stemfest.niu.edu/stemfest/).

M. **Cellular Service Stipend Policy Presentation (Parks)**
Haliczer turned the floor over to Parks who presented a plan by DoIT to end university sponsored cellphones and move to a cellular service stipend program. He explained reasons for the changes and discussed how this will be beneficial to both employees and the university. He noted there will be some exceptions to the program, which will be considered on a departmental/individual basis. He answered questions which were posed by Council members and asked those who had not had the opportunity to view the proposal to review the document and contact him with any additional questions, concerns, or suggestions. Council decided to also create a survey which would be placed in Vibe to gather input. He shared he will be presenting this information to other university Councils and campus groups for their input. All feedback will be compiled and reviewed again by the university Cabinet. It is hoped this program will be ready for employees by early in Spring 2015. He thanked Council for reviewing the proposal and sharing thoughts.

**Committees of the Council**
Before moving on with the meeting, Haliczer asked Council for a moment of silence to remember those lost on September 11, 2001.

**Awards**
Gilbert announced she and Parks will be meeting with Gautcher next week to work on transition and help with awards logistics for the upcoming year. The committee has contacted Dori Hooker, Executive Assistant to the President, to schedule a date for next year’s SPS Awards Ceremony. The committee will be reviewing nomination applications for the awards after the meeting with Gautcher and plans to open nominations for the Supportive Professional Staff Presidential Award for Excellence and the five new Staff Awards early next month.
Communications
Walk shared the committee is working on scheduling a meeting soon to begin work on the Fall edition of the SPS newsletter. They have been sending out emails for the Events committee and have been making website changes to Council representatives and alternates to ensure all the most current information is on the Council webpage. A suggestion was made to consider an article in the newsletter regarding employee morale.

Constitution & Elections
Stang announced there are many vacancies which need to be addressed and some committees that need appointments, so he asked for patience from Council while he worked through the list.

There is an SPS vacancy on the Academic Diversity Programs Advisory Committee. Five names were submitted via open campus nomination to fill this vacancy: Tracy Ash, Andrea Buford, Stephanie DeCicco, Michelle Pickett, and Tracy Rogers. **Council voted by ballot and Michelle Pickett was selected to fill the vacancy on the Academic Diversity Programs Advisory Committee.**

Stang shared there is a need for an SPS representative on the Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Committee. D. Miller told Stang she was willing to serve on the committee and he moved to approve D. Miller to fill the vacancy. The motion was seconded by Love-Moore. **Council voted and D. Miller was approved to serve as SPS representative on the Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Committee.**

Stang shared this was the final meeting for Livingston, so the Council needs to replace her. Livingston’s Alternate is Hardy, who has agreed to step up to Representative in Division 2. Stang made a motion to approve Hardy as replacement to Livingston through the remainder of Livingston’s term. The motion was seconded by D. Smith. **Council voted and Hardy was approved to replace Livingston as Representative in Division 2 through the remainder of her 2-year term.**

With Hardy moving from Alternate to Representative, Council needed to fill Hardy’s Alternate vacancy in Division 2. Stang shared Dave Lochbaum has agreed to complete the remainder of Hardy’s Alternate term. Stang made a motion to approve Lochbaum to complete the remainder of Hardy’s Alternate term in Division 2. The motion was seconded by Livingston. **Council voted and Dave Lochbaum was approved to complete the remainder of Hardy’s term as Alternate in Division 2.**

Stang announced that Wolfgang is also leaving campus, so her Alternate position in Division 2 also needed to be filled. He shared Patricia Martinez has agreed to complete the remainder of Wolfgang’s term on Council. Stang made a motion to approve Patricia Martinez to complete the remainder of Wolfgang’s Alternate term. The motion was seconded by Hardy. **Council voted and Patricia Martinez was approved to complete the remainder of Wolfgang’s term as Alternate in Division 2.**

Stang shared Oppenborn has taken another position and is no longer able to serve on Council, so there is a need to fill her Alternate vacancy in Division 3. He noted Mark Pietrowski has agreed to complete the remaining two year Alternate term for Oppenborn. Stang made a motion to approve Mark Pietrowski to complete the remainder of Oppenborn’s Alternate term. The motion was seconded by Love-Moore. **Council voted and Mark Pietrowski was approved to complete the remainder of Oppenborn’s Alternate term in Division 3.**

Stang announced Lauka has also left the university and her Alternate term in Division 4 needs to be completed. He said Jimena Burgin has agreed to complete the remaining Alternate term for Lauka. Stang made a motion to approve Jimena Burgin to complete the remaining Alternate
term for Lauka in Division 4. The motion was seconded by D. Smith. **Council voted and Jimena Burgin was approved to complete the remainder of Lauka’s Alternate term in Division 4.**

Stang reminded Council that during the August meeting, Oppenborn had been selected to serve as the SPS representative on the Ombudsperson Review Committee, with her no longer on Council a new representative is needed. D. Smith was originally the second person considered and she agreed to serve on the committee. Stang made a motion to appoint D. Smith to the Ombudsperson Review Committee. The motion was seconded by Love-Moore. **Council voted and D. Smith was approved to serve as the SPS Council representative on the Ombudsperson Review Committee.**

Finally, Stang announced Napientek needs to step off of the Parking Appeals committee, so Council will need to find a replacement for her. He asked members to share the opening with other SPS employees and to have those interested in completing her term to send their name to either he or Jacky. Council will vote upon her replacement during the October meeting. He congratulated the newly appointed to their positions and thanked Council for their assistance with filling the vacancies.

**Events**
Burlingame announced the “Communiversity Garden Tour and Tasting” on September 3rd, went extremely well as 13 employees attended the event. She said there are many opportunities for employees who wish to volunteer with the Communiversity garden, contact her for more details. She said the next “SPS Monthly Mixer” will be at PJ’s Courthouse Tavern in Sycamore on September 24th with the event beginning around 5 p.m., information will be sent to employees soon. The committee is working on remaining events for this semester. The committee would like to plan a tailgating event, but this might be on hold while some pricing matters are studied. Love-Moore shared the dates the committee was holding for another ‘Meals on Wheels’ event are currently full and volunteers are not needed at this time. The committee will look at dates again in the Spring. Burlingame said the committee hopes to have the remainder of the schedule completed by the October meeting.

**Finance**
Hull discussed the Council is spending a good deal of money on drinks and cookies for monthly meetings, yet during the past few meetings she has noticed a lot of this food and drink remains at the end of the meeting. She suggested Council consider reducing the amount of food which is ordered to save some money and provide more funds for Council. She also made a suggestion the Events committee consider hosting more student-centered activities.

**Legislative Issues**
Kipp and Schoenfeld announced they attended the BOT meeting and listened to President Baker talk about state budgetary concerns and their affect upon NIU’s budget. He announced the budget looks like it will be cut by about $223,000 instead of the possible $15 million which had been mentioned. They noted the state budget is still in question as upcoming elections and the possible state income tax changes may impact NIU’s budget in the future. They added there was discussion about the smoke-free campus changes which will begin in July 2015.

**SPS Dependent Scholarship**
Hardy reported there is $2,908 in the SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund. She shared donation packets with Council members who have not received information. She noted the committee will be working with Foundation again on a Fall campaign for the scholarship. Applications for this year’s award are now available online.
Technology Resources
Biletzky announced the date for the “Office 365 Lunch & Learn” has been set for October 21st and will be held in the HSC Capitol Room. This is expected to be a hands-on event as employees will be able to bring their own technology and try-out different aspects of the program. More information will be ready by the October meeting. If there are questions before the event, please contact Biletzky or Hammond.

Workplace Issues
Livingston had no update for this meeting. The committee will be meeting next week and will have an update for the October meeting. She added since there have been some members who have left Council there are openings on the committee. Haliczer thanked Livingston for her service to the Council and wished her luck as she moves to new ventures off campus.

Committees of the University

Vice President
Hardy announced there was no report for this month, as the committees are just beginning to meet. She will have a report next month. She began discussing concerns she had regarding the new bus loading on the East side of the Holmes Student Center since the start of the new academic year. Many Council members reported they have witnessed near accidents between pedestrians (students and staff) and cars. Council members discussed expressing concerns to university officials regarding the safety of students, campus employees and guests. Meyer made a motion that the SPS Council requests the university conduct a safety audit of the current bus loading on the East side of the Holmes Student Center to determine if it is safe. She requested the document be sent to Bill Nicklas, NIU Police Chief Tom Phillips, members of the Campus Security Environment Quality Committee and the Student Association. The motion was seconded by Love-Moore. The motion requesting the university conduct a safety audit of the current bus loading on the East side of the Holmes Student Center to determine if it is safe was unanimously approved. Haliczer and Hardy said they will draft the letter and send it soon.

OLD BUSINESS
A. Guest Speakers for 2014
Haliczer reminded Council Sarah Klaper, Ombudsperson, will be the guest speaker during the October meeting. She said she is still working to schedule guests for the remaining meetings of the year. Members were encouraged to submit names for other guests.

B. SPSC Annual Report
Haliczer shared the final revised and updated SPS Council Annual Report has been placed in Vibe by Gilbert. She asked everyone, especially members new to Council, to review the document and see the work which Council conducted over the past year. Gilbert was thanked for her work on editing and revising the document.

C. Grievance Hearing Board Training
Haliczer announced Bill Pitney is working to schedule more training for SPS Grievance Board members and other members serving on campus grievance boards. She thanked him for his efforts in scheduling this training and grievance board members have shared the training has been extremely helpful and made them feel more prepared for the work asked of them. Haliczer reiterated that before any grievance board is established and begins work, they will be given training to inform them of their responsibility and rights.
D. **Policy on University Service**
Haliczer asked for a motion to approve the amended ‘Policy on University Service’ which was presented to Council and discussed during the last meeting. The motion to approve the document was made by Love-Moore and was seconded by Builta. **The motion to approve the amended ‘Policy on University Service’ was approved.** Haliczer shared the document will now be presented to the Operating Staff Council for any changes and approval.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. **President’s Remarks at SPS Council Meeting & Town Hall - Recap**
Haliczer opened the floor to comments regarding President Baker’s visit to Council in August or of the recent Town Hall event. She informed Council that since President Baker was unable to answer all the questions proposed to him by Council during the meeting, he did answer them and posted the responses on his webpage, along with questions from the Town Hall.

Council discussed that employees understand the initiatives and goals of the President, but many wonder if the students have full comprehension. There are many initiatives being unveiled for students, but Council members wonder how students are hearing of this information. One example shared was the Junior Mock Interviews – which have been advertised for staff to share with students, but when several staff have contacted their students, the students have no idea what staff are even talking about even though the information was sent to students. This again led to a discussion on what is the best manner in which to send information to students, when it appears many do not read email from the university. Lots of good ideas are being created for students, but the students don’t receive the information and miss out on valuable opportunities.

B. **SPS Group Work – Addressing Employee Morale**
Haliczer planned a Council activity asking members to break into groups, discuss the problem of employee morale on campus, and determine some ways in which to address this growing concern. Four members (Piazza, Love-Moore, King-Cargile and Sutcliffe) lead groups in discussion. At the end of the smaller group think, the Council came back together and concerns and ideas from each group was shared. Gilbert will compile all of the information into one document and post it on Vibe, so that during the October meeting members can come back together to work on a plan of selecting some action items the Council can undertake to address campus morale.

**Operating Staff Council (OSC)**
There was no report from Montiero as he needed to leave before the end of the meeting.

**University Committee Reports**
Haliczer reminded Council of upcoming meetings for the university and added she will have reports for the October meeting.

**Adjournment**
With no further business, Haliczer reminded members the next Council meeting is planned for Thursday, October 9th. The motion to adjourn was made by Love-Moore and was seconded by Builta. **The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
*Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary*