Northern Illinois University
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting
MINUTES
Thursday, February 8, 2007
Holmes Student Center - Skyroom, 10:00 A.M.

Present
Linda Peterson, Missy Gillis, Adriana Moreno-Nevarez, Derrick Smith, Steve Lux, Michael Stang, Lynn Richards, Donna Prain, Michael Spieres, Grant Olson, Leslie Hecht, Michelle Pickett, Beth Bormann, Dana Gautcher, Todd Latham, Kay Chapman, Elizabeth Leake, Andre Crittenden, Sabrina Hammond, Deborah Haliczer, Norden Gilbert, Jon Ostenburg, Abby Chemers, Aline Click, Cliff Bottigliero, Monique Bernoudy, Bobbie Cesarek

Absent
Dan House

Guests
Donna Smith, Tim Griffin, Sonja Herington

I. Cesarek, Council President, called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

II. Announcements

a.) Per Cesarek, Steve Cunningham will be our guest at the April meeting to discuss the 6% rule.
b.) Leake shared that, due to budget constraints, her position is being eliminated January 08, and there is need for the council to elect a co-secretary in the event that she leaves campus. She hopes to remain on campus and continue to serve, but that will depend on where she finds future employment. (Note: A brief discussion about the need for a co-secretary ensued, and Gillis self-nominated. Additional nominations will be sought and an election will be held at the March meeting).
c.) Per Bernoudy, transportation to the airport for two or more personnel is available by our fleet. It is cheaper than hiring a limo service.

III. Committees of the Council

a. Awards: Upon the receipt of nominations received by the Awards Committee, four were chosen to recommend to President Peters as recipients of the SPS Presidential Award for Excellence: Lux, Lamb, Hopkins, and McHugh. Council voted to accept these four. Three nominees were brought forward for consideration of the receipt of the SPSC Service Award. Ostenburg, Peterson, and Leake. Council voted to award this honor to Leake.

b. Communications: The new SPSC Web Site design will be presented at the March Meeting. A new navigation scheme and directory information will be included.

c. Constitution and Elections: Spires reported that the timeline for voting is in place and nominations for President and Vice President are due Friday, March 2. Nominees are to reply by March 9. Their response should include a 200-word or less declaration of interest and what they would bring to Council.

d. Finance: Per Chemers, we have enough money to budget for printing, door prizes, survey incentives, and food for the after-hours event. This will prevent us from having to bring our own food. According to Chemers, Cynthia Nelson is assisting with the survey which will include a response mechanism. The response can be included in an incentive drawing. Nelson donated an incentive prize, and encourages others to also donate prizes. Discussion ensued about the tax implications for the individual and the university associated with donated prizes. Mueller
suggests that cash prizes and articles of value are taxed as income. For anything valued at $20.00 and up there are IRS-required procedures that need to be followed. Cesarek will research this issue and clarify with HR best practices to be presented at the March meeting.

Other budget issues: Per Cesarek, we will set aside $200.00 for the After Hours Spring event. Gillis is chairing the after-hours event this Spring.

e. Legislative: No report

f. Technology Resources: Ostenburg reported on the e-mail distribution list. Six lists are set up that will allow us to send to our constituents. He shared a printed copy of the lists. Fields include Name, title, department, and e-mail address. Per Cesarek, this list will be updated by the PeopleSoft feed every 2-weeks. Celeste Latham in HR is assisting with this process.

g. Workplace Issues: No report.

h. Vice President: See electronic report forwarded by Latham to SPSC Exec.

IV. Old Business

a.) SPS survey update – Spires reported that the new survey is currently being beta-tested. The public opinion lab will host the survey and send e-mails on our behalf. The survey will include some pop-up information. (Note: Leake offered to test this for accessibility by people with disabilities/users of assistive technologies). Spires noted that there will also be a PDF version available for anyone who wishes to print it out and complete it on paper. The timeline for completion is Monday or Tuesday the week of February 12.

b.) Salary Survey: Cesarek noted that Human Resources is working with the College/University Personnel Association to collect information to survey professional staff. Most have a code classification. It may mean analyzing our 800 SPS employees and determine where each should be classified. This is national data. Our goal is to find salary ranges for each position. Each employee is encouraged to look within their own professional organizations to determine whether or not salary information is available. This information should have a national scope.

c.) Evaluations: Cesarek noted that in the past evaluation notices had been sent by HR only to regular SPS as opposed to temporary SPS employees. In Spring Cunningham agrees to send notices (of evaluations due) to ALL regular AND temporary SPS supervisors. Discussion ensued. It was noted that a sentence needs to be added to the guidelines stating that in addition to the notices sent by HR, an employee may request that a form be sent to their supervisor. Should evaluations be “required,” or “recommended?” Many feel that softening the verbiage will cause fewer supervisors to complete evaluations. Concern was raised that if we make the completion of evaluations official policy it will set the stage for a university audit finding if a single one is neglected. Spires noted that the spirit of council is to put teeth into the mandate—not soften the mandate by changing the verbiage. It was noted that if it isn't a policy and a supervisor fails to complete it, then it becomes a negative thing for an employee if they insist that their supervisor complete one. “Prain suggested SPS should vote to make it mandatory for our own classification. “Fix the problem, don’t change the rules.” Jackson noted that the threat of an audit finding is a very compelling reason why our administration would want to avoid establishing a policy. It was noted that we should use shared governance channels to convey our concerns. Spires suggested that if we feel it is important enough to act on, it is important enough to establish policy and present this to the University Council. Haliczer suggested that Cesarek, as our representative to the administration, launch a public relations campaign to encourage supervisors follow best practices.
d.) Years of Service Awards: Should SPS be given “Years of Service” awards similar to those given to Operating Staff such as pens, clocks, rocking chair, etc? Cunningham and President Peters will address this issue. A motion was made and seconded that the SPS be recognized at ten years of service, with 5-year increments thereafter. The motion was not voted upon due to time constraints; the motion was unofficially tabled.

e.) Presidential Term (2 vs. 3 years): Cesarek suggested that a 3-year commitment is very difficult for most to manage. The job of SPSC President takes a lot of time and energy away from your regular responsibilities. If it were for a two-year commitment, we might have more people who would volunteer to assume this responsibility. Spires suggested that we consider the role of VP be elected on alternative years so that the roles overlap in the event of a transition. Latham suggested that the executive cabinet should also be elected on alternate years in an effort to facilitate this change; the VP would serve as a President Elect while the roles transition. Spires noted that this suggestion is predicated on the assumption that a President serves one term, and the VP automatically ascends. Some may not want to. Ostenburg noted that a tie is possible due to the way the voting could occur. The president’s vote would be the tie-breaker. Additionally, Ostenburg noted that it might be prudent to consider that only SPSC members may ascend to these positions, and make that clear within our bylaws. Spires noted that he did not feel he had sufficient guidance from the Council about what it wants to do to put forward a recommendation at this time. Add to the agenda at a future date for further action by the Constitution & Elections Committee.

f.) Ride Share: Per Cesarek, there is now a Gasoline Price guide on the ride share website. Troy Melendez, director of Commuter and NonTraditional Student Services has offered this service to SPS employees. They aren’t seeking additional funding at this time. The project has already been funded. Visit the website: [http://www.niu.edu/RideShare/](http://www.niu.edu/RideShare/)

g.) Wellness Fair: March 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the next Council meeting.

h.) Strategic Planning Update: Haliczer provided a brief update of the activities of this initiative. They had met with a consultant. There are four working groups: 1, teaching, 2 scholarship, 3 region, 4 NIU Community. Chairs for each group were appointed, and working groups will convene February 9, 2007.

i.) After Hours Event: Per Gillis, the event is scheduled for Thursday, April 19 in the Thurgood Marshall Gallery, Swen Parson Hall.

V. New Business

a.) Salary increments: Per Cesarek, Faculty will provide input on increments. See her report next month.

b.) President’s Report: A Personal Response System (PRS) was chosen. E-Instruction PRS has been officially endorsed by the university. Cunningham will visit SPSC in April. Two SIU professors are suing the Ethics Board over Ethics training requirements. See full electronic report.

VI. University Committee Reports

See e-reports online from Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate, and University Council.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.