Northern Illinois University  
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting  
MINUTES  
Thursday, July 16, 2009  
Sky Room, 10:00 A.M.

Present  
Bradley Badgley, Frankie Benson, Monique Bernoudy, Cliff Bottiglierio, Steve Builta, Bobbie Cesarek, Abby Chemers, Jen Clark, Walter Czerniak, Deborah Fransen, Norden Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Cynthia Nelson, Lyndon Perkins, Scott Peska, Dawn Roznowski, Donna Smith, Michael Stang, Sharon Wyland, Rachel Xidis, Phil Young

Guests  
Tim Griffin, Jay Monteiro

Absent  
Pat Anderson, Neil Dickey, Dan House, Al Mueller

I. Call to Order
SPS Council President Bobbie Cesarek called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. after a Council photo was taken.

A. A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**

B. The minutes of the May 14, 2009, meeting were discussed. Griffin asked about a statement regarding temporary SPS in IV.C.1. Since the accuracy of the statement could not be either confirmed or denied, it was removed. Under IV.C.2, the percent of the focus on soft skills for the mandatory supervisory training, as reported by Cesarek, should be 25%. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2009, meeting as amended. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Due to the retreat, which took place on June 11, 2009, in lieu of a Council meeting, there are no Council minutes for June.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

II. Announcements

A. Evaluation of Steve Cunningham. Cesarek reported that according to the NIU constitution and By-laws, Article 18, a five year performance review is to be conducted on Cunningham and his position and that she submitted an evaluation of Cunningham as requested.

B. SURES board results. Cesarek announced the results of the SURES board election. Contributing members elected are Jeffrey Beaulieu, Carbondale; Dorinda Miller, Urbana; J. Fred Giertz, Champaign; Antonio Vasquez, Chicago. Annuitant members elected are: John Engstrom, Sycamore; Mitchell Vogel, Evanston. She added that Cunningham came in a close fifth place. Cesarek also reported that Cunningham feels that the new members will serve SURES well.

C. Congratulations to Public Affairs. Cesarek reported that she sent the Office of Public Affairs congratulations on behalf of the Council. The office won the Silver Anvil Award from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) for its work following the tragic February 14, 2008 campus shooting. No institution of higher education has
ever won this award. Cesarek will make sure that all the staff involved in the Office of Public Affairs gets a copy of the congratulations letter.

III. Committees of the Council

There were no reports of committee meetings. But each committee reported on the work that they do for the benefit of new members and a sign-up sheet for committees was routed among the members present. Cesarek encouraged alternates to also sign up for a committee and asked each committee to convene before the next Council meeting to at least select a chair.

A. Awards
Halicer reported that this committee does several tasks throughout the year including select the SPS Presidential Award recipients and conduct a grant workshop.

B. Communications
Xidis reported that this committee works on updating the SPSCI website, monitors the SPSC e-mail in-box, and works closely with the Telecommunications Committee on communications with constituents such as e-mail announcements about upcoming events.

C. Constitution and Elections
Gilbert reported that this committee makes recommendations for changes to the constitution, elections for Council members and president, and SPS appointments to university-wide committees.

D. Events
Cesarek explained that this committee developed out of the need to have oversight over the variety of events sponsored by the Council every year. Examples of events are the new member orientation and “Between Hours” lunches with speakers.

E. Finance
Chemers reported that the committee meets a couple times per year, mostly via e-mail, to review budgetary issues. She added that the Council treasurer processes payments and places necessary orders.

F. Legislative
Peska reported that this committee meets on an as-needed basis and looks at what’s happening legislatively at the state and federal levels. He reported that the FY2009-10 state budget was passed and noted that NIU will receive funds in the capital budget for Stevens and Cole Hall renovations and planning money for a computer science building.

G. Technology Resources
This committee works most closely with the Communications Committee focusing on e-mail groups and e-mail communications.

H. Workplace Issues
Clark reported that this committee meets monthly and takes on many of the bigger issues facing the Council such as temporary SPS, tuition waivers, and mandatory supervisory training.

I. Vice President
In Latham’s absence, Cesarek reported that this report is prepared by the Council’s vice-president and is a compilation of the work being done by other university committees.

IV. Old Business

A. Retreat. Cesarek reported that it was a productive day where Council members were able to look at many issues in greater detail.
   1. Temporary SPS. The concern regarding benefits still exists. The main issue is that temporary SPS cannot carry over their vacation and sick leave and most are not aware of this fact until it’s too late. Better communication is needed on this point as well as the fact that temporary SPS may borrow from future benefits earned. Bernoudy asked if the discrepancies among some contracts were discussed and it was determined that more work was needed on the various issues for temporary SPS. Perkins noted that the Temporary SPS issue is big enough to warrant its own ad hoc committee.
   2. SPS Service. The issue of whether or not SPS should have required service to the university and/or community was discussed. While faculty are required to perform some sort of service to the university, it is sometimes difficult for SPS (and operating staff) to serve the university. Most of this involves time commitments, but often it is heard that supervisors are unwilling to allow subordinates to serve on university committees.
   3. Service Awards. It was noted that SPS employees are not recognized for their employment at the university until 25 years. It was discussed at the retreat that there could be ways to recognize employees to keep up morale without getting into the high costs associated with receiving a token of appreciation like the operating staff receive. Nelson noted that what the Awards Committee does through certificates of recognition resonates more with employees than recognition for just the time worked. The difference in awards programs for different employment classifications was discussed and Haliczer noted that the difference is mostly historical. Costs of the award programs was discussed and Haliczer will research this and report back to Council. It was agreed that more recognition needs to be done from a morale standpoint and what can be done for a minimum cost should be discussed in the future.
Czerniak reported that Information Technology did an awards banquet for its employees, most of who were moved to the new facility on Route 23. He noted that everyone received something and this went a long way towards improving morale. Cesarek added that this is one of the reasons why she has been pushing with Cunningham for soft skills to be added to the mandatory supervisory training. Supervisors need to better show employees how much they are appreciated.

B. Sabbaticals.
The sabbatical workshop was held on July 7, 2009. Xidis will post copies of the materials presented on the SPSC webpage. It was also noted that the committee is working on a proposal that could revise sabbatical parameters for SPS. Lux will send out a survey in the fall and the committee will use the results as justification for the proposal. Survey questions will include reasons why SPS do not apply for sabbaticals and would they pursue one if they could continue to work part-time while working on their research.

C. Grievance Procedures
A draft prepared by Griffin, Haliczer, Perkins, and Spires, was presented to Council members. Haliczer thanked the contributors, especially Spires who did most of the
She then explained that the current NIU grievance procedure does not include the appeals process for dismissal for cause. Supportive professional staff would have to find that policy elsewhere. The draft policy incorporates dismissal for cause. Cesarek asked Council members to be prepared to discuss the draft of the revisions at the next meeting.

V. New Business

A. Officer Elections. Nominations for Council vice-president, secretary, and treasurer were received and voted on with the following results: vice-president, Todd Latham; secretary, Donna Smith; treasurer, Abby Chemers. Gilbert asked about the status of a recording secretary and Cesarek reported that she is looking at some options; she has not given up on that idea.

VI. University Committee Reports

A. The following reports from Cesarek were distributed prior to the meeting: BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee; and BOT Finance, Facilities, and Operations Committee. Cesarek added that she receives agenda books in advance of all the BOT committee and full board meetings and that any Council member is welcome to contact Cesarek if they would like to review them.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, SPSC secretary