Northern Illinois University  
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting  
MINUTES  
Thursday, June 10, 2010  
Sky Room, 10:00 A.M.

Present  
Pat Anderson, Nancy Apperson, Bradley Badgley, Frankie Benson,  
Steve Builta, Abby Chemers, Jen Clark, Neil Dickey, Dana Gautcher, Missy Gillis, Gail Hayenga,  
Dan House, Jean Jagodzinski, Julia Lamb, Todd Latham, Al Mueller, Cynthia Nelson, Jonathon  
Ostenburg, Lyndon Perkins, Scott Peska, Nyoka Polyak, Tracy Rogers, Dawn Roznowski, Michael  
Stang, Connie Uhlken, Craig Williams, Sharon Wyland, Rachel Xidis, Phil Young

Guests

Absent

I. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 10:20 a.m.

Peska made a motion, seconded by Perkins, to approve the agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chemers made a motion, seconded by Haliczer, to approve the SPSC minutes of the April May 20, 2010, meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

II. Announcements

A. Latham passed around information about vendor visits to campus regarding NIU 403(b) Supplemental Retirement Plans

III. Committees of the Council

A. Awards  
No report.

B. Communications  
No report.

C. Constitution and Elections  
Mueller reported that voting in the recent election was 28% (up from 25% last year). He noted the shorter timeframe provided for voting did not appear to impact voter response. Mueller announced Todd Latham as the winner in the election for President,
by a very close margin. Mueller reported election of the following for division representatives and alternates:

Division 1 – Representatives: Donna Smith, Randy Napientek
Division 2 – Representatives: Michael Stang, Anne Hardy, Jennifer Montag
    Alternates: Bev Espe, Scott Peska
Division 3 – Representatives: Julia Lamb, Phill Young
    Alternates: Samantha Fisher, Mark Pietrowski
Division 4 – Representatives: Dawn Roznowski, Rita Yusko
    Alternates: Lyndon Perkins, Karinne Bredberg, Joan Briscoe
Division 5 – Representatives: Rachel Xidis, Nancy Apperson, Dena Funkhouser, Patricia Anderson;
    Alternates: Dan House, Kathy Smith, Laura Lundelius, Karen Baker
Division 6 – Representatives: Salvatore Morreale, Ryan Harris

D. Events
   No report.

E. Finance
   Chemers reported that the Council used approximately $2000 of its $2300 budget. There was no activity on the Credit Union account, except accrual of $.05 in interest.

F. Legislative
   Peska reported that the governor signed the borrowing bill.

G. Technology Resources
   No Report.

H. Workplace Issues
   No Report.

I. Vice President
   Latham noted the yearend report distributed (by email with the minutes and agenda). He indicated it would be distributed again in July with additional committee reports, which were missing in this version.

IV. Old Business

A. Sabbaticals.
   Haliczer reported the committee is working to schedule a meeting to move forward, summarize, and come up with a final report. Haliczer noted there was a good response rate. The committee will share more details at the July meeting.

B. SPS Survey Update
   Nelson reported that she and the committee (House, Haliczer, Lux, and Roznowski) are reviewing and analyzing results. There were 230 returns, about a 25% response rate. She noted that often most response comes from those who feel strongly. One of the top things looked at was respondents overall happiness at NIU. Eight years ago responses were at 79%, 2 years ago they were at 82%, this time responses showed 74% were happy overall. Once results are compiled, the plan is to turn over the top issues to the Workplace issues committee. Latham asked to have results finalized by next meeting. Nelson indicated the committee would have something to share in July and have issues to pass along to Workplace Issues.
C. Latham announced the SPS Retreat will be held on July 15 at 9 a.m., prior to the 10 a.m. meeting.

D. Latham announced SPS Orientation for new members will be held July 15 at 8 a.m.

V. New Business

A. Elections to SPS Council 2010 – 2011
   (See Elections Report)

B. Elections to SPS Council President 2010 – 2011
   (See Elections Report)

C. Elections to Committees of the University
   Latham indicated reports about vacancies on NIU committees and commissions will be sent out to all SPS prior to the next meeting.

D. Grievance Procedure to University Council – Proposed Amendment.
   Latham indicated the need to revisit the Council’s proposed amendment to the grievance procedure in order to readdress some issues Haliczer and Steve Cunningham shared. The goal is to resolve those issues now, if possible to avoid the proposal being held up when it reaches University Council.

   Haliczer stated that one primary aspect of the proposed amendment which could result in issues when brought to University Council pertains to specification for where records are kept for grievances related to termination for cause. She indicated that currently these records are kept at Human Resource Services in a separate, secured set of files which are not available for general access. The phrasing in the current proposed amendment (11.5.32.h & 11.5.33.e) states these grievance records should be kept with the Executive Secretary of the University Council. Haliczer suggested changes to these sections of the proposed amendment, whereby the Executive Secretary of University Council and Associate Vice President of Human Resource Services should have access to these files, but they are maintained at Human Resources in the office of the AVP. She argued regular turnover of Executive Secretary of University Council can be problematic in consistency of record-keeping and procedural issues.

   Mueller inquired about whether there is some sort of note in the general personnel file which indicates there is a grievance document elsewhere. Haliczer stated that there will be documentation to indicate the grievance file is stored in a different, secure location. She went on to explain there are multiple separate files that do not end up in the official personnel file – such as FMLA files, disability files, etc.

   Perkins asked to clarify that the Council would be voting on the fact the grievance file would be stored in HR, not University Council. Chemers indicated that when the Council had previously voted on the proposed amendment, the information regarding current record storage procedures was not clearly understood. Perkins stated he thought part of the issue related to storage was in protecting the employee interests, by placing them in a neutral location. Latham clarified that previous information indicated faculty grievance records were stored at University Council, that is the reason for the current phrasing in the Council’s amendment. He went on to say that if we don’t change the phrasing from how it currently reads, Cunningham, Peters and other administrators could argue
against passing it along for approval. Perkins questioned if that meant this was not a sure thing, even if we approved it. Latham confirmed that it would need to be discussed and approved by University Council.

A discussion followed related to storage of files in HR versus University Council. Latham suggested the idea of storing files in both locations, which would help accommodate for the procedural need to respond to grievances within 10 days, but would mean two parties would have access to the files. Ostenburg noted the issues related to possible bias depending upon storage and access, and asked where operating staff and faculty grievance records were stored. Haliczer stated these records are stored in HR. She went on to explain that historically, filing grievances across employment classifications was not possible—which was part of the situation that triggered exploration of revamping the Grievance procedures. She clarified that currently the Executive Secretary and AVP of HR send a grievance letter together, but the AVP follows through on coordinating the procedure. She also clarified that there have been no issues specifically related to loss of records, but that there have been issues with timely processing. Latham noted that people thought there would be more accountability with storage in two locations. Builta stated that the point of this is to standardize, so it makes sense to store the files at HR to keep things standard. Fransen questioned whether it would be out of the line of duty for the Executive Secretary to handle storage? Chemers noted that the University Council office is not necessarily secured, as the door is often open without people there. Latham shared that the Ombudsman, Griffin (unable to attend the meeting) had explained there have been issues about trust, efficiency, and accuracy with files in the past.

Nelson made a motion to revise the grievance document to keep records at HR and follow the process accordingly. Ostenburg seconded the motion. Discussion and clarifications followed. Benson indicated she had heard about HR blocking grievances in the past. Perkins noted that when the current grievance document was brought before the Council at the last meeting it was not clear we were going against standard procedures for storage. Ostenburg noted storage and processing are separate issues - how things are handled have separate mechanisms in place. House stated the Executive Secretary of Council changes on a regular basis, so consistency cannot be guaranteed when that role changes. Haliczer explained there are two requests on the table: one related to record-keeping and another pertaining to transmittal of information/communication and paperwork flow. There are fail safes in the process to make sure things are done as they should be – the AVP of HR, Executive Secretary, Faculty and SPS Personnel Advisor, and Legal Services are all a part of this process. Haliczer also stated that for consistency, these changes regarding storage of the grievance files make sense. Haliczer went on to share that timing issues related to the procedure have been questioned by some people. For instance, the 10-day response time noted in the process will likely be argued at University Council, but is not our issue today. FOIA requires a 5-day response time, regardless of outside factors. Perkins asked for confirmation that both the AVP of HR and Executive Secretary of University Council would have access to the files. Haliczer confirmed that they would.

The motion on the floor was restated – Relative to Section 11.5.32.h and 11.5.33.e in the proposed amendment to the Grievance Procedure the Council moves that records related to grievance procedures be kept in Human Resource Services along with where recordings from the procedure are kept. Polyak clarified that the AVP will maintain these records. An oral vote was taken and passed without dissent.
VI. University Committee Reports

No reports.

VII. Adjournment

Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Nelson, seconded by Builta and passed unanimously at 11:15 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rachel Xidis