Northern Illinois University
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting
MINUTES
Thursday, September 22, 2011
HSC Clara Sperling Skyroom
10:00 a.m.

Present: Nancy Apperson, Karen Baker, Steve Builta, Lametra Curry, Neil Dickey, Angela Dreesen, Dena Funkhouser, Dana Gautcher, Lesley Gilbert, Deborah Haliczer, Anne Hardy, Ryan Harris, Holly Holliday-Jones, Michael Kavulic, Julia Lamb, Todd Latham, Janet Love-Moore, Laura Lundelius, Debra Miller, Salvatore Morreale, Jonathon Ostenburg, Tris Ottolino, Scott Peska, Mark Pietrowski, Dawn Roznowski, Donna Smith, Kathy Smith, Michael Stang, Brian Walk, Rachel Xidis, Phil Young and Rita Yusko

Excused: Pat Anderson and Samantha Fisher

Absent: Gail Hayenga

Guests: Tim Griffin and Andy Small

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by Supportive Professional Staff Council President Todd Latham.

The agenda was amended to include under “Announcements”, the addition of (g) Women’s Resource Center and (h) Host Families. “New Business” was amended to add (e) SPS Shopping Cart Merchant Account. President Latham asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Lamb and seconded by Roznowski. The motion to approve the amended agenda was passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the SPSC minutes from the August 11, 2011 meeting was made by Haliczer and was seconded by Yusko. The motion to approve the minutes was passed unanimously.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Before President Latham introduced the Guest Speakers, he asked Council to move the “NIU Shopping Cart Merchant Account” discussion up since Treasurer Funkhouser was attending the meeting while on vacation. Latham asked for a motion to approve setting up the account, the fees and transaction fee. Latham was advised those had already been voted upon and approved during the August meeting. Latham advised that he needed to amend the vote to include three Council members who would be responsible for overseeing the account. The first would be the Technology Resources Chair (Ostenburg) who would be providing technical support. The second will be the Event Chair (Hardy) who will be responsible for handling confirmations, cancellations, refunds or other aspects of the events. The final Council member to oversee the account will be the Treasurer (Funkhouser) who will oversee expenditures, fees and if called in for audit would represent the Council. Motion to approve expenditures for the account and approve the three Council members to oversee the account was made by Ostenburg and was seconded by Apperson. The motion was passed unanimously.

Guest Speaker
President Latham reported to Council about serving on the Athletic Board. He informed Council the Athletic Board’s main goals are to review equity of the program, review the budget and student well-being. They also discuss athletic functions, ways to involve the Alumni in
programs, ways to work with the surrounding community, ticket pricing and packages, and other functions such as compliance with NCAA policies. He added he will continue to update Council on the Board in future reports.

K. Smith next reported on the Academic Policies and Procedure Manual (APPM) Advisory Committee. She said while the committee has not physically met, they have been discussing and sharing information via email. The Committee works on reviewing academic matters and is currently working on revising the appeals process, but are waiting for the respective university entities to approve the revised appeals language.

**Announcements**

A. **Benefits Enrollment Period**
   Haliczer informed Council there will be a special benefits period for employees from October 10 - 28, 2011. Employees will be receiving information from Dr. Steven Cunningham announcing this news. Employees will only be able to change their health plan during the period. Information will also be on the Human Resources (HR) website.

B. **Retirement Seminar**
   Haliczer announced the Retirement Seminar will be held all day on Wednesday, October 19, 2011, in the Holmes Student Center Regency Room. She shared a flyer with Council and reported that Social Security will not be attending the seminar. She stated that HR will be leading two “How to Retire” seminars – the first on September 28th which is already full and a second on November 4th. With the potential for a great deal of additional retirements during the Fall and Spring semesters – HR expects the second session will fill quickly also, so make sure to register early if interested.

   Haliczer informed Council HR staff is looking at the implications of another year of larger than normal retirements. They are trying to determine if additional workshops to address employee concerns are required. One of the main issues under review is employees retiring quickly and remaining staff being asked to assume additional work and how those employees will cope.

C. **SURS**
   Haliczer reminded Council SURS will be on campus for appointments October 18 – 20, 2011. All of their appointments are expected to be full, but Haliczer told Council SURS can take appointments over the phone as well. If anyone has questions, they should contact Marlene Bryant or Dennis Davito, in Human Resources.

D. **Flu Shots**
   Haliczer reported the DeKalb County Health Department hosted its first of two Flu Shot clinics in the Holmes Student Center Regency Room on Tuesday, September 20th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. As part of the clinic, the Health Department ran a mock emergency drill providing information to flu shot participants. She congratulated Apperson’s staff for their coordination of the clinic. Haliczer reminded Council there will be a second clinic on Wednesday, October 12, 2011, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. again in the Regency Room. If employees are unable to attend the final October date, the Health Department has additional date when the shots will be available; employees can call and ask for times. Employees can attend those sessions, but will need to bring along their employee identification and insurance card.

E. **NIU Annuitants**
   Haliczer asked all Council members who are not currently NIU Annuitants members to strongly consider becoming one and for those who are members, she challenged to speak with fellow colleagues and encourage them to join. Membership can be payroll
deducted and with many changes possibly expected to pensions, now is the time to join
as decisions being made now affect everyone.

F. Sexual Assault Prevention Workshop
Haliczer shared with Council that HR, Student Affairs and a number of university
individuals have been meeting to establish a university recognized plan to ensure that all
faculty, staff, advisors, supervisors and others on campus know how to respond to a
sexual assault report – with the goal being to have a whole network of employees who
would have the knowledge. The first of what will be many planning sessions over the
course of this academic year has already been held. Anyone with feedback can send
their comments to Kelly Wesener, Karen Baker or Haliczer.

G. Women’s Resource Center
Haliczer ended her report by informing Council that the Women’s Resource Center will
be hosting a “Clothing Swap” on Thursday, October 6th. The NIU community is asked to
bring in women’s and men’s clothes which students will be able to select from to help
them create an outfit to wear for job interviews. An informational flyer was shared with
Council.

H. Host Families
Lamb shared with Council a request from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies
(CSEAS) and the “Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program”. The Leadership
Program is funded by a U.S. State Department Grant, allowing twenty-five high school
students and six adult leaders from five Southeast Asian countries to spend three weeks
in the U.S. as part of the program. Part of the participant’s time is spent living with host
families to get an introduction to American life. This year’s Leadership Program runs
from October 26th to November 19th and participants will live with host families for twelve
days from October 30th until November 10th. CSEAS is in need of host families, Lamb
shared information with Council and asked if people are interested to contact her or the
CSEAS.

Committees of the Council

Awards
Gautcher reported to Council the SPS Spring Awards Ceremony is planned for Tuesday, April
17, 2012. In October, the call for SPS Presidential Award for Excellence nominations will be
announced. Gautcher asked Council members to nominate colleagues and even consider
someone, even if you’re unsure whether they are an SPS member or not, for this award.
Council was reminded nominations do require three letters of support and will be due in early
December.

Communications
Xidis had no report, but thanked everyone for their participation in the group photo before the
meeting. A suggestion was made to provide information next year before the photo to the HSC
Information Desk, including a phone number, to assist members who are lost so they can get
directions.

Constitution & Elections
Stang reminded Council there were three SPS employees interested in filling the vacancy for
the Libraries Advisory Committee – Pat Anderson, Andrea Buford and Steven Estes. Stang
sent Council the nominee’s statements prior to the meeting and asked for a vote on a
replacement. Council voted and Pat Anderson was selected to fill the vacancy.
**Events**
Hardy announced the first event for this year will be a Brown Bag discussion with Jim Lockard, SURS Representative, on Thursday, October 20, 2011 at noon in Campus Life Building Room 100 and employees can bring lunch or pay for one.

Hardy updated Council regarding the SPS Football tailgate plans. The Faculty & Staff Appreciation Day game, which was the initial preferred date for the SPS tailgate, is Friday, November 25th. This date is the day after Thanksgiving and “Black Friday” causing many doubts for the committee expecting many employees to not be in attendance. The committee will still try to plan something for the Saturday, October 8th game. The committee is also trying to plan an SPS event before one of the home Basketball games.

She asked her committee members to stay after the meeting so they could discuss plans and asked Council to send any Event committee members suggestions for future events.

**Finance**
There was no report from the Finance committee.

**Legislative Issues**
Peska reported the committee met and they are working on tips for SPS employees on how they can contact Legislators properly using the correct protocols. Once the information is compiled the Committee will share the details with the Communications committee so it can be posted on the SPS website. He expects the information to be ready shortly.

**Technology Resources**
Ostenburg told Council he has updated all the mailing lists and there are currently 939 active employee entries. He said he will be working with Hardy to set-up the SPS Merchant Shopping Cart Account. He added his committee met earlier in the week and have several projects which will be keeping them busy.

**Workplace Issues**
Lamb reported the committee met on September 14th and discussed lots of issues, including SPS Temporary status, “Double-Dipping”, stress on campus and how employees may be presenting frustration and concern to NIU students. The committee realizes the increased retirement rate and more work being placed upon remaining employees is causing a lot of stress. Double-dipping is also a concern because some employees believe bringing a retired employee back keeps others from the chance of promotion. Lamb stated the committee will work on some resolutions and will bring their ideas back to Council for suggestions and approval.

**Vice President**
D. Smith began by reminding Council to review the reports she had submitted on behalf of the SPS representatives to the APPM Committee (K. Smith), Campus Parking Committee (Gail Jacky), Parking Appeals Committee (Gail Jacky) and the University Benefits Committee (Haliczer).

She also gave a report on the Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Committee. She told Council some of the committee’s goals are to review the committee’s events, publish a book and work on developing assessment tools to measure feedback and results. She also shared the Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Institute will not be held in 2012 and will likely be hosted every other year. The next institute will be held in 2013.

President Latham and D. Smith also spoke about the meeting they had with Dr. Steven Cunningham to address some Council issues. Latham stated he compiled agenda items from
past years (2009 to present) to prepare a list of any past unresolved and current subjects, the follow list of items was discussed:

- Evaluations….SPSC asked if they still be done in a timely manner and are work load changes being properly reflected on them?

- SPSC Proposal for Vision 2020….The section of the Vision 2020 plan regarding SPS employees was very limited. SPSC would like to see employee rewards, promotion and retention addressed as important aspects of the Vision 2020 plan. Latham reported HR is researching methods to do this while staying within university budget.

- SPS Temporary Employee Benefits…SPSC wanted to know if there is a way these employees could carry over vacation days or bank their days. There is a request to change the title to something other than “SPS Temporary Employees”. There have been many complaints brought to SPS Council that many employees remain temporary for years without being offered a chance at regular employment.

- Employee Workloads…The question was asked about what is being planned if there are more mass retirements during the Fall and Spring semesters and how will the workloads be handled. HR is reviewing the problem.

- Pension Benefits

- Employee Relations

- Mandatory Supervisor Training…SPSC would like to see Supervisor Training made mandatory by administrators at the top. Problems addressed included upset employees and supervisor problems – leading to increased workplace issues. Haliczer reminded Council that HR does offer Supervisor I, II and III training sessions, but not all take advantage of the training.

- Training & Travel Cuts…SPS employees have expressed frustration regarding financial cuts for travel and training. Employees are asking for more campus webinar opportunities for employee/staff development.

- Double-Dipping…SPSC believes this should only be a short-term, not long-term solution for NIU.

- Paths for Promotion and Salaries…SPSC requested that NIU explain to SPS employees the ways to get promoted within their departments. When a senior-ranking SPS employee leaves, someone working under them should be the natural choice for succession, but this does not always happen. SPS employees want to know why. Council also requested HR include salary information when posting employment opportunities. This would enable potential applicants to make more informed decisions when choosing to apply for a position, rather than learning the salary once they are involved in the process.

- Employee Morale…SPSC addressed concerns regarding employee morale and how it may also be affecting NIU students.

President Latham and D. Smith reported Cunningham did listen to all topics addressed and said he would be willing to meet again to address resolution to these concerns. Latham asked Council if there are any additional topics which should be addressed with HR to please send them to him.
OLD BUSINESS

A. Ad Hoc PR Committee - Newsletter
   D. Smith shared with Council she is waiting on a few final submissions for the newsletter and has been working with Ostenburg on the newsletter layout. She said there will be about five articles, photographs and hopefully HR information regarding SPS new hires, retirees and transfers. A suggestions was made by Tim Griffin to include the SPS group photo which had been taken earlier in the day.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Vision 2020
   President Latham reported to Council the NIU Board of Trustees approved the Vision 2020 plan during their most recent meeting. Questions were raised by several Council members as to how the program will be funded. Many wondered if a NIU Foundation fundraising event might occur to support the plan. Many members expressed unease about asking SPS employees for more money when there has not yet been a report on how the funds from the “True North” campaign have been spent.

B. NIU One Card
   Council has been asked to investigate why university employees are being forced to pay for replacement ID cards, if having them is a requirement for the job. The issue raised is, if they are required for use on campus as part of an employee’s job, then replacing lost or damaged cards or updating to a new ID card should be free for employees. Many members expressed understanding having a replacement fee if someone losses their ID card excessively, but not otherwise. Council will schedule a meeting to speak with the One Card leadership regarding replacement fees and Love-Moore said she is willing to meet with them since she has worked in the office.

C. SOEEA Work Time Reporting
   Peska shared with Council there have been many complaints from SPS employees regarding the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (SOEEA) Work Time Reporting. Concerns addressed include; employees not being able to log into the system, employees not being able to connect to the system outside of the country, employees having problems reporting and submitting their time sheets before the end of month deadline. After much discussion where members shared similar concerns, Haliczer suggested inviting Celeste Latham, from Human Resources, to the next Council meeting to answer questions, address concerns and try to offer some insight into the process and find out what are the consequences for those not submitting time sheets in a timely manner. Peska asked Council to send their concerns to him, he will compile them all and submit them in advance of the meeting to C. Latham so she will have time to prepare a response.

University Committee Reports

President Latham shared with Council he’d submitted his Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate and University Council reports prior to the meeting and advised Council to review the content.

Latham offered Andy Small, Operating Staff Council (OSC) President, time to report on the OSC. Small reported the OSC will be meeting with John Gordon, Convocation Center Director, and Public Safety officials on Thursday, October 6, 2011 at 9 a.m. to discuss its Tiered Parking plan and clear up some misconceptions. Apperson made a motion for the SPSC to support the
OSC on their Tiered Parking plan. The motion was seconded by K. Smith. **Council voted and passed the motion.** Small thanked Council for their support of the OSC in this matter.

Small also shared with Council the OSC will be attending the “Council of Councils” meeting in October. He said this group started twelve years ago and is comprised of OSC colleagues around Illinois from the twelve university state schools. The Councils meet to discuss issues affecting OSC members and has been extremely beneficial and informative. He said she will share more at the next meeting.

**Open Discussion**

Ostenburg addressed concern over the number of break-ins occurring to cars on campus this semester. Council addressed safety issues with these break-ins, as the numbers seem extremely high for so early in the semester. Several Council members requested President Latham speak with Public Safety to address these issues. Small welcomed an SPS representative to join the OSC at their October 6th meeting since Public Safety will be in attendance. Latham will see if Gail Jacky is able to attend.

Haliczer reminded Council the “403(b) Supplemental Retirement Vendor Fair” will be held on Friday, September 23, 2011 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Holmes Student Center Capitol Room. Four approved vendors will be in attendance. A question was raised to why there are only four vendors and Haliczer explained the university chooses vendors with the best ratings and reviews feedback received from other NIU entities.

**Adjournment**

Lamb made a motion, which was seconded by Morreale to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary