Northern Illinois University  
Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting  
MINUTES  
Thursday, November 17, 2011  
HSC Heritage Room  
10:00 a.m.


Excused:  Anne Hardy, Scott Peska, Dawn Roznowski, Michael Stang and Phil Young

Absent:  None

Guests:  Dr. Steven Cunningham, John Gordon, Dr. Tim Griffin, Gail Jacky, Celeste Latham and Andy Small

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Supportive Professional Staff Council President Todd Latham.

President Latham asked for additions to the agenda, hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the agenda.  Motion to approve the agenda was made by K. Smith and was seconded by Gautcher.  The motion to approve the agenda was passed unanimously.

President Latham asked if there were any corrections to the October 13, 2011 meeting minutes.  With no corrections, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes.  The motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Fisher and was seconded by Ottolino.  The motion to approve the meeting minutes was passed unanimously.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Announcements
A.  Presidential Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) Award
President Latham announced the PCSW is accepting nominations for this year’s ‘Outstanding Women Student Awards’.  The deadline for nominations is Friday, December 16, 2011.

B.  Football Faculty-Staff Appreciation Day
Morreale shared with Council that employees will receive information about the annual Faculty-Staff Appreciation Day during the NIU Football game against Eastern Michigan on Friday, November 25th.  The game begins at 10 a.m. and the email will explain to employees how they can get their complementary tickets.

C.  Men’s Soccer and Women’s Volleyball Games
Morreale also announced the Men’s Soccer team, who are MAC Conference Champions, will be hosting the first round of the NCAA Championship against Western Illinois University at 1 p.m. today.  He also told Council the Women’s Volleyball team, who are MAC West Region Champs, will be the #1 seed going into the MAC tournament.
D. Human Resources Blood Drive
President Latham informed Council that Human Resource Services will be hosting a blood drive on Tuesday, December 6, 2011, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Human Resource Services building.

Guest Speakers

Campus Parking Committee – John Gordon and Gail Jacky
President Latham welcomed John Gordon, Convocation Center Director, and Gail Jacky, who are both members of the Campus Parking Committee to the day’s meeting. Jacky is also a member of the Parking Appeals Committee. Gordon thanked Council for the opportunity to update Council, share information with Council and answer questions.

Gordon gave some history on the Campus Parking Committee and update on the budget. He noted that following a few years in the red, after raising parking fees and fines, the increase has allowed Parking to start to build up funds and get out of the red. Gordon spoke on some of the projects the Parking Committee has planned, including adding more lighting to the parking garage, adding video cameras to the garage and upgrades to some of the parking lots. Gordon also shared with Council the E2 Parking lot, located at the Convocation Center, is now open to employees at a cost of $40, a possible cheaper option for employees. Employees can park in the lot and catch the bus back to central campus.

Several recommendations were shared with Gordon and Jacky by Council members including the following:

- Consider pro-rated parking fees for employees based upon employee salary and research if there was a proposal for free parking based upon salary, was discussed two years ago.
- Add speed bumps in the parking garage to slow drivers in the garage.
- Remove/clear the blind spot by McDonald’s and Stevens Building.
- Ensure sufficient handicap parking is available on campus with consistent signage.

Gordon asked if Council had other questions or concerns to feel free to email them to Kristin Mommsen, Parking Director. President Latham again thanked Gordon and Jacky for attending the meeting.

Human Resources
President Latham next welcomed Dr. Steven Cunningham and Celeste Latham to the meeting to discuss the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (SOEEA) and answer Human Resources (HR) questions which were submitted by Council prior to the meeting.

Discussion began by answering questions about the SOEEA Act. Cunningham addressed the following concerns:

- 9 and 10 month employees are expected to complete the SOEEA form while they are off-contract because it is a statutory requirement and is an obligation for employees.
- HR tries to avoid employees having to face consequences of not completing the SOEEA form by assisting those with problems. If necessary, consequences are judged on a case-by-case matter. About 99% of employees do complete the SOEEA form in a timely manner.
- The ability to add bulk time is designed to be user-friendly, but allowing employees to submit time before the end of the month would not always be an accurate reflection of some employee’s actual work time.
• HR does try to work with employees who will be out of the country to ensure completion of the form; if HR is informed the employee will be out of the country in advance.

Cunningham opened the floor to other questions regarding SOEEA. With none, he moved to answering the HR questions submitted by Council.

• **Winter Holiday** – Many SPS employees expressed concern regarding the late notification of this year’s Holiday closure date. Cunningham discussed how the Councils (SPS, OSC and other university committees) were consulted about using two Vacation days to extend the break. He addressed concerns regarding employees who may not have the two vacation days banked for use. (Council was advised that employees are allowed to borrow from future vacation days to be accrued, if they notify HR in advance.) Cunningham stated in the future HR will try to get the holiday dates approved at the same time as the closure dates for 2013 with University Council in October. A suggestion was made to publish proposed holiday dates if not approved in October, so employees could plan ahead of time.

• **Workload Issues** – Cunningham encouraged Council to read the Vision 2020 Sustainability Report, where workload concerns were discussed. Cunningham stated President Peters and other administrators understand more work is being given to employees. He suggested Council advise employees to speak to HR if they feel their workload is excessive or if an employee is being exploited. A recommendation was made for HR to set guidelines for employees that would help them determine what would be considered an “excessive workload”. Cunningham said he will talk to the President’s Cabinet about these workload concerns and turnover of employees.

• **Job Descriptions/Evaluations** – Cunningham reported that job descriptions are currently updated/received at 28%. Cunningham discussed concerns about SPS positions being lost back to Civil Service positions after they are reviewed. C. Latham reported evaluations are being received at about an 80% submission rate, which is the highest in years.

• **Training** – President Latham asked Cunningham if there were ways which employees could participate in training via webinars and if they knew of any excellent sites for such training, since employee travel has been cut for such events. Cunningham advised ITS and HR offer training opportunities for employees and can specialize sessions for departments.

• **Salary/survey status** – C. Latham said HR is working with other universities to try to audit SPS/AP positions, but there is no real established system and positions/titles often differ on various universities.

• **Job positions and salaries** – President Latham requested having salaries posted along with any new positions on the HR website. It was reported HR is launching a tracking system to see how many employees are reviewing positions and will include salaries as part of the information.

• **Reward/Recognition** – Cunningham agrees that Faculty and SPS employees should have some form of recognition like Civil Service employees. HR is researching costs behind this, but think they will be able to do this. He added this is in the Vision 2020 plan.

• **Newsletter** – Cunningham stated HR did receive a request to include SPS hires/milestones information for the SPS newsletter. C. Latham added there are some concerns which need to be reviewed considering the releases of employee information (i.e., department location and even including an employee’s name). C. Latham added HR is working to create a webpage which will acknowledge years of service milestones for employees.
- **Temporary Benefits** – HR is looking over information submitted, is reviewing options and is working on benchmarks. HR would like to have information by next Fiscal Year, so if changes or modifications need to be made, it can be done with the next round of contracts.

Cunningham next gave Council an update on the Pension and SB512, along with a handout with SURS employee facts and the current Two-Tier system. He noted NIU is working actively on all levels to create awareness of the circumstances and create options other than SB512. He added he does not believe SB512 will be called during the November 29th session, but could happen and wants employees to be prepared. There was much discussion amongst Council with Cunningham regarding SB512 rumors and misrepresentations regarding current retiree pensions. Many discussed how retirements will be affected by the passage of SB512. Cunningham added the pension problem is resolvable, but must be fixed now. Council thanked Cunningham for all his time and hard work fighting for employees downstate and for sharing his knowledge with employees regarding the pensions and SB512.

Cunningham and C. Latham thanked Council again for allowing time to speak and update projects for SPS. They hope to be able to return for a future meeting.

**Committees of the Council**

**Awards**
Gautcher reminded Council the call for nominations for the ‘Supportive Professional Staff Presidential Award for Excellence’ was made about five weeks ago. She added another reminder will go out next week, reminding employees the nomination deadline is December 1st. She stated with only six nominations received last year, the committee hopes for better results this year. The Committee will bring its recommendations to Council in January.

**Communications**
Xidis announced the SPSC website has been converted to the new university Cascade format and was sent to Executive Council members for review before being officially launched. She added there are a few changes which will be made before the launch.

**Constitution & Elections**
Fisher reported the committee is continuing to review the Constitution and Elections process and has decided they are not going to include the Merchant Shopping Account information in the Constitution. She asked Council to vote upon an individual to fill the Alternate vacancy in Division 6. President Latham announced that Cliff Bottiglieri is interested in filling the current vacancy and has served on Council in the past. A motion was made by Haliczer to approve Bottiglieri to fill the Division 6 Alternate vacancy. This motion was seconded by Love-Moore. **The motion to approve Bottiglieri for the Division 6 Alternate position was passed unanimously.**

**Events**
Hardy was unable to attend the meeting, but Council members announced about 21 employees attended the November 15th ‘Football Tailgate/After-Hours’ event which was held at Pizza Pros. Those in attendance liked the location and believe more events like this should be planned for the future.

**Finance**
Funkhouser announced Council did receive the new banner at a cost of $84. She added she is still working on the Merchant Shopping Account.
**Legislative Issues**
Petty-Johnson reported the Committee has been working to gather information for the SPSC Legislative web link. She added more items will be added soon. The Committee hopes to include information about who is sponsoring legislative bills, bills which will be coming before the Assembly for a vote and bill status updates.

**Technology Resources**
Ostenburg reported he is still working on the Merchant Shopping Account. He said he would like to have it ready for the next Council event. He added he is working with D. Smith to finish the newsletter template.

**Workplace Issues**
Lamb reported the Committee is looking into benchmarks of Temporary SPS benefits and will report on their findings. The Committee is tabling the Rehiring Resolution until they are able to clarify some information. They also discussed 360 Degree Evaluations and are gathering resources to assist SPS employees when communicating with students. Lamb stated the Committee is reviewing if the university has a Vacation Bank, similar to the Sick Leave Bank. They are researching and will also report these findings in a future meeting. Lamb reported some concern had been addressed regarding the diversity on the Council. She reported Council has and will continue to provide all SPS employees the opportunity to serve on the Council.

**Vice President**
D. Smith reminded Council to review her report which was submitted to Council before the meeting. She added she continues to work with Ostenburg on the newsletter template, which should be available to SPS members before the end of the year.

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. **SOEEA**
This update was included under the Guest Speakers of Cunningham and C. Latham.

B. **One Card**
Love-Moore provided a follow-up to her report from the October meeting and clarified the following:
- One Card reports to Human Resource Services.
- Every NIU employee is entitled to one free NIU One Card, with the exception of temporary status (Extra Help) employees.
- The employee One Cart is a privilege and each card is the property of NIU (as is stated on the back of the card).
- It is not a mandated requirement for an employee to carry the card, nor are there any policies for employees regarding carrying or usage of the card.
- Few Faculty and Staff members lose their cards, most replacements come from students.
- Things associated with the card – Library privileges, Recreation Services entrance, Huskie Bucks, Daycare entrance, and more are listed on the One Card website.

President Latham asked Council if they would like further action taken regarding One Card and Council are content with information gathered by Love-Moore, who was thanked for her time.
NEW BUSINESS

Due to the length of the day’s meeting, there was no new business for the meeting.

University Committee Reports

President Latham asked Council to review the University Committee Reports for Faculty Senate, Board of Trustees, University Council and Operating Staff Council which were submitted via email before the meeting. If anyone has questions, he asked to please email him.

Adjournment

President Latham asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was made by Morreale and was seconded by Gillis. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Lesley Gilbert, SPSC Secretary