1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Meeting Agenda Approval ...........................................................................................................page 1

3. Review and Approval of Minutes of May 7, 2020 and May 20, 2020 .............pages 2-5 & 6-7 resp.

4. Treasurer’s Report ............................................................................................................................page 8

5. Visiting Committees/Guests
   a. OSC Dependent Scholarship Winners: 9:15 AM
   b. Matt Streb, President’s Chief of Staff: 9:45AM

6. Public Comment

7. Announcements/Correspondence
   a. President’s Announcements
   b. Pulchratia Smith: Human Resource Services (HRS)
   c. Cindy Kozumlisk: 125th Anniversary Committee

8. Shared Governance Reports
   a. Board of Trustees (BOT)
   b. Student Government Association (SGA)
   c. Faculty Senate
   d. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)
   e. University Council (UC)

9. Committee Reports
   a. Elections and Appointments
   b. Legislative Committee
   c. Public Relations/Activities
   d. Workplace Issues
   e. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)
   f. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

10. Prior Business
    a. Communication of Resolution 2020.1

11. New Business
    a. APAC Proposal ......................................................................................................................page 9

12. Adjournment
Minutes of the Operating Staff Council  
May 7, 2020  
Teams Meeting  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.


Absent: Berg, Bivens, Meyer

Visitors: Klaper, Latham, Pearson, Ranken, P. Smith

Guest Speakers: Bryan Perry, General Counsel  
Greg Brady, Deputy General Counsel and DER

I. Call to Order: President Royce called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call: Royce confirmed a quorum. Attendance recorded by Teams.

III. Approval of Agenda: Royce called for a motion to approve the Agenda. Nicholson moved, Kozumplik seconded; all in favor, no abstentions, none opposed; the motion passes; the May 7, 2020 Agenda are approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes: Royce asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2020 meeting. Hulseberg moved, Johnson seconded. Skelley noted that her name is repeatedly misspelled. The correction being made, all in favor, no abstentions, none opposed; the motion passes; the April 2, 2020 minutes were approved pending correction of misspellings.

V. Treasurer’s Report: Wielert reported that we were asked to request a lower budget next year. We don’t know yet if we will have our annual picnic, but we want that amount in our budget with a 10% increase. So Wielert will be requesting the cost of last year’s picnic plus 10% for a total of $7,452. Wielert will deduct $963 not needed for the newsletter and $140 not needed for mailing the newsletter and at least two meetings of coffee at $50 amounting to one increase and three deductions, a net reduction of $476.

VI. Visiting Guests:  
Bryan Perry, General Counsel: Mr. Perry said he was very happy to be here and talk about his office. He explained that the collective experience of their team and his lengthy labor relations experience presents a good baseline to talk about things before they get too far down the road. He said, “[W]e have a great team for whatever comes next.”

Greg Brady, Depty General Counsel & DER: Mr. Brady discussed his recent appointment as the Designated Employee Representative (DER) for NIU to the state civil service system. He explained that becoming the DER adds a “tremendous amount of catch up” especially in our current situation.

Some questions from the Council were brought:

Q. Is the labor relations team shift to reporting to the General Counsel permanent?

A. Perry the shift is permanent right now but that could change, responding that he pledged to Lisa Freeman that whatever the university needs, he was “on-board.” Most of his career has
been working with unions, allows him a different perspective: set expectations and clear communications. Noting the different world we are living in now, transparency, communication and follow-up—being at the table with him; being involved.

Q. Many students are facing legal situations i.e. leaving homes, out of work. Is that something you are also helping with?

A. **Brady** responded explaining the difference between the Student Legal Assistance office with two attorneys who primarily assist students with their legal issues and is funded through student fees. Whereas the General Counsel’s Office, whose sole client is the university. However, we are now in a new world and we are helping the administration, faculty and staff help students and Joe Lovelace, Director of the Student Legal Assistance office, is one option for students. **Perry** added that the offices stay in touch and the General Counsel’s office helps where they can, although they cannot assist directly.

Q. Your opinion on voluntary or mandatory give backs, could others besides the administration do that? And challenges ahead, i.e. furloughs, suspension of rules

A. **Perry:** Employee give back has not been presented. Among the administration, it is an opportunity to give back. I will take that idea back to Freeman.

Also, regarding a question about relaxation of rules for sick leave, Perry responded that the administration would “use every power within legal parameters to keep employees home and working.” Those decisions would be thoughtful and bargained for, stressing the importance of a partnership with employees.

Q. Tell us more about your role as Designated Employee Representative, your duties, responsibilities?

A. **Brady** responded that his role is to be the liaison and coordinator between the system office and NIU. He named examples of transactions that require his authorization. He has been reviewing the rules and procedures manual, developing a comfort level in the role, adding that he is available for consultation on civil service matters.

Q. Regarding the 16 month transition period for SPS employees—some employees have been transitioned sooner—has there been a shift?

A. **Smith, P.** replied that when HR knows there is going to be a transition, they move sooner rather than later. After some discussion it was decided by Brady that there appears to be a conflict between civil service and SPS notice rules and said he would be keeping his eye on that issue.

**VII. Public Comment:** None

**VIII. Announcements/Correspondence:**

A. **President’s Announcements:** Royce thanked council members for their suggestions and ideas, which sent him “well armed” into meetings. If stay at home is lifted, many will remain remote. Matt Streb is heading up various Task Forces and the Employee Assistance Program will be offering additional support opportunities.
One council member finds it very concerning that while President Freeman is committed to all stakeholders; staff stakeholders with constructive ideas about returning to work, are not represented on any of the return to work task forces.

**B. Pulchratia Smith, HRS:** updated the council on HR activities. Smith has been working with Audrey Southard, interim HR Director, on policies/guidelines etc. coming out of the President’s office. They have been having weekly meetings with other HR directors. NIU is in a better place than many of our colleagues at other state schools. Trying to stay on top of the changes due to COVID-19. I don’t know any more about returning to campus for our employees. I expect there will be some roll out but I don’t know how that looks. I don’t know the composition of the committees.

Miriah Ranken, HRS, noted that Liz Guess is hosting workshop on retirement. If you want more information, email HR and they will get you signed up.

**Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program (VRIP):** P. Smith did not have details but said those eligible would have received notice by May 15. Eligible employees may indicate interest without committing. The employee would get a packet and would have 45 days to make a decision to be effective no later than August 1, 2020. And yes, health insurance rates are going up.

P. Smith also briefly explained Layoffs v Furloughs: Layoff is a separation from the University. You are no longer an employee and are eligible for unemployment, however, benefits are terminated on the last day of work. Recalls are on seniority basis. Furlough means you are still employed you just work and get paid for fewer hours; you are not eligible for unemployment compensation; you keep your insurance but not your benefits. See the Civil Service System website for more detailed information. It was noted that the BOT has to discuss furloughs 30 days before employees notified.

**C. Cindy Kozumplik** announced that all 125th Anniversary events are suspended for right now with no clarification on when this is going to be lifted. I have nothing to report.

**D. Sarah Klaper, Ombudsperson:** Two things: every Friday gay and I are holding an open house 11-12. Feel free to join us for questions or friendly chat. See also our Teams presentation on trials and tribulations of working from home. Now we realize some of the challenges we face. If you want to talk through that, I have some tips and pointers, mostly a discussion. Wednesday 11:30-12:30 One hour. Teams link on calendar. Email if you want to join and we will forward a link to you.

**IX. Shared Governance Reports:**

A. **BOT:** has not met

B. **SGA:** met and had elections, new officers, new leaders

C. **Faculty Senate:** Kendall Thu was re-elected as President of the Senate and Executive Director of University Council. Thu reported that both the Faculty Senate and the University Council voted overwhelmingly to: reduce the number of committees at the University; turn over academic matters to the Faculty Senate; reduce size of the University Council, equalizing its membership and to make the required Constitutional changes which is on-going. The BOT must approve these changes at their June meeting. Thanks to Jeffry and Cathy for the effort put in discussing and working through the process where we all compromised. (Jeffry noted increased staff representation from 6% to 31%.)

D. **SPSC:** no report, met 3 weeks ago with little to discuss.

E. **University Council:** Thu reported the University Council voted to approve Article 11, (Establishment of Grievance Process for Non-Union Faculty and Staff) that will be posted to the Policy Library. Thu said he would keep everyone updated moving forward.

**X. Committee Reports**

A. **Elections & Appointments:** Monteiro reported that the committee met twice. The first call for candidates only garnered 6 applications. I sent out some recruitment emails and we extended the deadline. As of this morning we were up to 14. The new deadline is May 8.
Other dates: Ballots go out electronically on May 18 and voting ends Friday, May 22. Newly elected representatives/alternates are invited to the June 4 meeting and are officially seated at the July 2 meeting. At our June meeting we will be taking nominations for council officers. We’re still trying to figure out how we are going to do elections. We are going to be asking the Executive Committee to look into a more consistent number of seats up for election each year.

B. Legislative Committee: Skelley reported that they did not meet but will be holding a meeting to begin looking at the idea of evening out the number of vacant seats each year.

C. Public Relations/Activities Committee: Ayres reported they met via Teams just to check in and saying hello.

D. Workplace Issues Committee: Royce reported that the committee elected Natasha Johnson as the new chairperson. They are planning to come up with some communication about PPE for returning workers.

E. APAC: Ranken reported APAC held a short meeting to cancel the annual breakfast in April. Ranken also thanked the Operating Staff Council for allowing APAC to present their Patricia S. Siebrasse Award at the Service Awards ceremony on October 14, 2020.

F. EAC: Hulseberg reported they met on April 23 where they discussed suspension of rules across the state regarding the extension of probationary periods and how each campus utilizes that. The System Office will be scrutinizing those decisions. We also had a discussion about furloughing noting that the staff level is where cuts will be made. We also discussed a voluntary program by staff to give back some of their earnings or volunteer to furlough. However, if some employees give up time willingly and then more cuts are made, we are not sure how that would work out. Not sure what will come. I meet with the Merit Board next week and EAC in July.

XI. Prior Business:

A. Approval of March 5, 2020 Minutes: Stacey has been caring for her mother, and understandably has not sent the March minutes. I will send them out and we can vote to approve them at our next meeting. Royce moved to table the March minutes; Kozumplik asked if that vote could be done by email. Royce made a friendly amendment to allow approval by email, Nicholson seconded; all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions; the motion passes; the March minutes will be approved by email.¹

XII. New Business: Some of what we just created, OSC Team and a number of channels, seems to be working pretty well, and I hope we can use it to work more effectively. But there have been some problems sending an email to one channel. Kozumplik suggested that someone do a summary of what is put in Teams and then that content is added in announcements?

XIII. Adjournment: Royce called for a motion to adjourn. Kozumplik so moved, seconded by Johnson; all in favor, no abstentions, none opposed; the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Frances Mitchell on behalf of Stacey Bivens.

¹ The March minutes were approved at a Special Meeting on May 20, 2020
Minutes of the Operating Staff Council

*Special Meeting*

May 20, 2020

Teams Meeting

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.


Absent: Berg, Meyer

Visitors: None

Guest Speakers: None

I. Call to Order: President Royce called the meeting to order at 11:33 a.m. and verified a quorum.

II. Roll Call: Royce confirmed a quorum. Attendance recorded by Teams.

III. Approval of Agenda: Royce called for a motion to approve the Agenda. Nicholson so moved, seconded by Bivens; all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions; the Agenda is approved.

IV. Public Comment: None

V. Announcements/Correspondence:

A. President’s Announcements: Royce recommended members consult our Teams channels to view topics of recent discussions; and he continued-on to acknowledge the recent layoff of approximately 75 operating staff employees. Some layoffs are intended to be temporary, some are being offered downgrades to 9 or 10 month contracts/positions, and other positions are being eliminated permanently. Hulseberg read one layoff letter with no call back information and that benefits pay is unavailable for 120 days.

Royce expressed his disappointment with the lack of transparency surrounding these layoffs, citing recent Board of Trustees meetings where there was no acknowledgement by board members or administrative leaders. Another council member mentioned not seeing anything in the local newspapers and another noted that this keeps being referred to as temporary layoffs with hope of bringing the employees back. A discussion followed and it was decided that Royce would contact Pulchratia Smith for more information about the process.

VI. Prior Business:

A. Approval of March 5, 2020 Minutes: Royce called for a motion to approve the March meeting minutes as there were not enough votes online to officially approve them. Nicholson so moved, Hulseberg seconded; all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions; the March 5, 2020 Minutes of the Operating Staff Council are approved.

VII. New Business:

A. Resolution 2020.1: Voluntary Pay Deductions: Royce explained that the OSC should make an official acknowledgment of these layoffs and felt that calling this special meeting was warranted. This proposal (sponsored by Hulseberg, co-authored with Royce) is brought forth to show support for those employees who have been impacted, indicate appreciation for the administration’s
employee commitment and communication, as well as to offer a meaningful proposal to help prevent further layoffs and bring those temporarily laid off back to work sooner. Royce proceeded with a first reading of the Resolution. He then yielded the motion to accept the Resolution to Hulseberg. Hulseberg so moved, Nicholson seconded.

Discussion followed, resulting in a 13 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstention vote to approve Resolution 2020.1. Royce thanked the council and plans to forward the Resolution to Matt Streb and Liz Wright. Several council members wanted to clarify that the pay deduction/furlough program requested by the resolution is, indeed, that temporary and participating employees could elect to end their participation at any time. There was a question as to whether the Resolution should go before an employee referendum, and there was a response that employee participation levels would be the referendum. Council members acknowledged that not all employees would support this proposition but concluded generally that those employees who wish to contribute should be permitted the opportunity to do so.

VIII. Adjournment: Royce called for a motion to adjourn. Kozumplik so moved, Skelley seconded; all in favor, none opposed; the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Frances Mitchell on behalf of Stacey Bivens.
NIU OPERATING STAFF COUNCIL
FY 19-20
Treasurer’s Report
May 31, 2020

OPERATING STAFF COUNCIL

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OPERATING STAFF DEPENDENT ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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We distributed $3,240.00 in scholarships using FY 20 funds and some of FY 21 funds.

$1,234.04 is the remaining amount we can distribute in the Spring of 2021.

PAYROLL

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Prepared 5-31-2020

Per Matt Streb, a 12% reduction in the budget from last year is required. Our beginning balance last year was $10,164.41. With the 12% reduction, we will need to deduct $1,219.72 or our request can be no more than $8,944.68.
To: Jeffry Royce and Executive Committee, Operating Staff Council (OSC)
From: Miriah Ranken and Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)
Re: Subcommittee Proposal
Date: 05/12/2020

The Administrative Professionals Advisory Council recently met to address the role and purpose of APAC and what it provides for its stakeholders. After discussion, the council concluded that the purpose and role of APAC has changed since its beginnings in 1995. The needs of our constituents are fulfilled by HRS, the EAP L.E.T.S (Leading Employees to Success) program, AFSCME Local 1890, and OSC.

APAC determined that the most significant benefit the council provides is the annual Administrative Professional’s Breakfast and Patricia S. Siebrasse Award. The breakfast is 100% funded by donations and would not impact the OSC budget. APAC believes that it is important to continue to provide this for our stakeholders, which total around 250 employees.

To that end, APAC believes we can best serve our stakeholders by combining resources with the Operating Staff Council.

APAC envisions and respectfully proposes the following:

1. OSC consider absorbing APAC.
   a. There are currently 8 APAC council members, 2 of which are OSC council members.
   b. The remaining 6 would like to sit on the OSC, as non-voting members, until the next election when they could choose to submit interest in being on the OSC ballot.

2. OSC consider APAC as a subcommittee of OSC, appropriately named it for its role.
   a. Current APAC members have agreed to serve on the committee on a continual basis or as OSC sees fit.
   b. APAC could be renamed the Administrative Professional’s Breakfast committee or Administrative Professional’s Recognition committee.
   c. APAC has already done the planning and coordination for this year’s Patricia S. Siebrasse award and would like to honor the winner at the Presidential Awards Ceremony in October.

3. OSC consider adopting some of the APAC website information and resources as their own. [https://www.niu.edu/apac/index.shtml](https://www.niu.edu/apac/index.shtml) Specifically:
   a. Administrative Professional Resources
   b. Notary Public
   c. Patricia S. Siebrasse Award
   d. Administrative Professional’s Breakfast