

**Minutes**  
**Operating Staff Council**  
October 5, 2017  
**Holmes Student Center 306 – 9:00 A.M.**

*Present:* Barb Andree, Nancy Brown, Judy Burgess, John Hulseberg, Cindy Kozumplik, Katja Marjetic, Brian Mihalik, Jay Monteiro, Holly Nicholson, Pamela Pittman, Karen Smith, Patricia Wielert

*Absent:* Stacey Bivens, Ellen Cabrera, Angie Gutierrez-Vargas, Jeffry Royce, Mary Wyzard

*Guests:* Laura Harris, Sarah Klaper, Celeste Latham, Frances Mitchell, Linda Saborío, Pulchratia Smith, Matt Streb

**I. Call to Order**

President Andree called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:10 A.M.

**II. Roll Call**

Attendance was recorded by Frances Mitchell, acting Secretary.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Andree proposed the agenda be amended by moving item XII. B. from New Business to item VI. B. Visiting Committees/Guests. A motion was made by Hulseberg to accept the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Wielert and passed by unanimous vote.

**IV. Approval of September 7, 2017, minutes**

A motion was made by Burgess to accept the September 7, 2017, minutes. The motion was seconded by Nicholson and passed by unanimous vote.

**V. Treasurer's Report**

No report from newly-elected Treasurer Wielert due to incomplete transition of access and signature authority. There will be a report in November.

**VI. Visiting Committees/Guests**

A. Dr. Matt Streb, NIU Chief of Staff, visited the OSC meeting. He thanked the council for inviting him, and spoke about the importance of the administration staying in touch with the shared governance groups. Streb updated the OSC on the president search and the budget. Regarding the president search, Board of Trustees President Wheeler

Coleman and Vice-president Dennis Barsema heard loud and clear that this should be an open search with open forums. They also want as many people as possible involved in the process. As a result, the Board of Trustees has decided to delay and start the search during the fall of 2018 in order to have a new president in place by July 1, 2019. They want to allow time to make sure the search is done right.

Streb reported that the administration is putting together a Search Prep Committee. One of the things a Search Prep Committee would consider is what does an advertisement for a university president look like? They are typically 15 pages. What is the first thing potential applicants are going to see in that ad? In the meantime, Streb stressed that there will be no slowing down. The administration is moving forward to address the challenges ahead.

Streb stressed the positive regarding the budget. It is wonderful that we have a budget. It is not a perfect budget; we still face challenges. The university took a 10% cut, and enrollment is down, but our incoming student enrollment is up. We have staff who have not seen a raise in 6-7 years. He said the administration has to prioritize our most important resource-our people. We need to reward them.

Streb discussed NIU's infrastructure which needs attention, especially after long-delayed maintenance. He informed OSC that the university had to delve into its reserves and of our need to rebuild those reserves. Streb warned that it is not clear that NIU will not take more cuts. He reminded the OSC that the administration is trying to balance these competing forces, and they will be making long-term decisions which he noted has not happened in the past, which has created budget problems year after year. He reminded the group that it takes money to save money. He asked, what can we invest in, and what is the return in investment? The administration is struggling with those questions right now.

Streb discussed NIU's standing from the Brookings Institution. This is a link to that information: <http://myniu.com/research-leader/>. He reminded the group that although everything is not perfect, NIU has a lot of great things going on. The administration needs to hear from us, because the university's strength will always be from the bottom up. If you see inefficiency, talk to your supervisor. If you see a policy that is problematic, let the NIU administration know. Streb closed by thanking the group for all we do for NIU and for being part of this organization.

Before opening the floor to Q&A, Streb brought the OSC up-to-date on the General Counsel search. He said they are getting ready to launch a nationwide search. They are not using a search firm, and the search will be for a General Counsel, and not for a Vice President and General Counsel. Streb reported that administration is putting together a committee right now and expect to be done in November. He also noted that we do not have a Vice President for Administration and Finance right now. The last candidate forum was held yesterday and we will probably have an answer very soon. We had some great candidates.

Streb then answered questions from the council.

Q: Why will the General Counsel position no longer be a vice president?

A: We have too many vice-presidents. We are concerned about administrative bloat and there is no real reason to have the General Counsel be a vice-presidential position.

Q: Why are you putting together the presidential prep committee?

A: Starting in fall of 2018, we will launch the search committee. You may send an e-mail to Matt Streb if you are interested on being on the prep committee.

Q: If we are the “backbone” of the university, then what is the reason they cannot get the 3% increase?

A: They (union members) are eligible. They just have to go through a different path.

Q: Comment regarding equity: With 4,000 employees, it is hard to define equity. There are issues we need to address. 1.) Personal development and attendance at university events, and 2.) There are lenient and non-lenient supervisors. We need to look at our policies. Is there any way from the top down to increase equity?

A: 1.) The Policy Library is still very much in play.

2.) I couldn't agree with you more about the second point. We want people to be engaged in the university. We will be discussing operating staff participation in shared governance, presidential commissions, etc. at our next senior leadership roundtable meeting.

Q: What are Lisa Freeman's thoughts on outsourcing Building Services?

A: We have not had a conversation about outsourcing Building Services.

Q: There are concerns about safety issues in offices. If Building Services is outsourced, then it is even more of a security issue.

A: We have not had conversations about outsourcing. When looking at outsourcing, there are often negatives associated with it that may not be immediately clear. For example, what looks like an initial cost savings may be more expensive in the long run.

Q: The “threat” of outsourcing has had a chilling effect on building service workers' willingness to speak out. Whether the threat is explicit or implicit, the workers hear that their job is on the line. This has also had a chilling effect on other employees who are afraid to report inadequacies or needed changes for fear of another employee losing their job.

A: As a university, we cannot have a culture where people are afraid to speak up for fear of reprisal. We encourage feedback and honest, open dialogue. Thank you for making me aware of this concern.

B. Pulchratia Smith and Celeste Latham gave a presentation on desk audits and the PeopleAdmin system. A change in job responsibilities triggers a desk audit, which could result in a reclassification. Latham reported that Human Resource Services has streamlined PeopleAdmin. It goes through the hiring manager to the department head, then to the business manager, then to the division head, and from there to Human Resource Services. This process usually takes about 30 days. Sometimes the reason for

the desk audit is very clear. The first step is to set up a desk audit with the employee and then with the supervisor. A supervisor really cannot deny a desk audit. If this appears to be the case, please e-mail Celeste or Pulchratia.

There has to be a job description. After the desk audit, they may determine whether it does or does not meet the requirements for reclassification. Also, if the employee does not meet the qualifications of the reclassification, they cannot complete the desk audit, and the duties requiring a new classification must be removed from the employee's job responsibilities. They ask for a job description. Do new duties merit a reclassification? Does the employee meet the qualifications of the new classification? If so, and division says no (i.e. no money), then the duties need to be removed. Celeste recommended this information on the Human Resource Services website:

<http://www.hr.niu.edu/hrs/employment/cs-deskaudit.shtml> .

Typically, you should be doing the job duties for 30 days before the reclassification.

## **VII. Public Comment**

Some inquiries were made to Celeste Latham and Pulchratia Smith about specific situations regarding desk audits, and a question was asked about whether a department could fill a vacancy from within without posting the vacancy and going through the standard protocol.

## **VIII. Announcements/Correspondence**

Smith announced that ethics training will start in October. Also, flu shots will be available in the Regency Room in the Holmes Student Center on Thursday, October 26 from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M.

The Employee Assistance Program is looking for families who need help with Thanksgiving holiday dinner. Send names to Karen Smith. All submissions will be kept confidential. There was an inquiry about making cash donations. Smith replied that only gift cards can be accepted.

Nicholson announced that there is a link on Acting President Lisa Freeman's webpage which contains quarterly reports for expenditures for travel and hospitality. The link can be found on the lower left portion of the president's webpage: <http://www.niu.edu/president/>

Saborío shared a new or previously unknown feature of Lynda.com. Lynda.com can take a course syllabus and map it to what the program has available on topics related to the syllabus.

An Operating Staff Council special meeting was held on September 28, 2017. The council discussed the 3% wage increment and installed its new Treasurer, Patricia Wielert.

The OSC is in need of alternates. If you know of anyone who would like to be considered for an alternate position, please contact Holly Nicholson.

## **IX. Shared Governance Reports**

### **A. Board of Trustees**

Saborío announced that a special meeting of the Board of Trustees will take place October 19, 2017, at 9:00 A.M., in room 315 of Altgeld Hall. The 3% wage increment and other items will be discussed.

### **B. Faculty Senate**

No report

### **C. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)**

No report. Next meeting will take place October 12, 2017, at 10:00 A.M., in the Sky Room.

### **D. University Council**

No report

### **E. University Advisory Council**

No report

## **X. Committee Reports**

### **A. Council of Councils Ad Hoc Committee**

The Council of Councils annual conference is being held at NIU on Friday, October 20, 2017. The conference is a daylong meeting for state of Illinois public university civil service staff council members. It will be a day of important state legislation updates, professional development, and networking. The webpage for the event is <http://www.niu.edu/osc/council-of-councils.shtml>. The full schedule is on the webpage. All OSC members should contact Andy Small if they plan to attend. When asked about proper attire, Nicholson advised to wear red and black.

### **B. Elections and Appointments**

Patricia Wielert was installed as the new Treasurer at the OSC's September 28, 2017, special meeting.

### **C. Employee Morale**

Kozumplik presented the work the Morale Committee has been doing to create two personal leave days – one to use and one to give to a good cause. The committee took an electronic vote and some amendments were made. The latest, amended version is attached to these minutes. Kozumplik reminded meeting attendees that it was a proposal, and that rules for implementing it will be determined by the University Benefits Committee. Kozumplik called for a motion to take the proposal to the SPS

Council for joint sponsorship. A motion was made by Nicholson to take the proposal to the SPS Council. The motion was seconded by Pittman and passed by unanimous vote.

#### D. Legislative Committee

No report

#### E. Public Relations/Activities

Jay Monteiro was elected chair. The committee would like to sponsor another January bowling night.

#### F. Workplace Issues

Members of the committee are checking sections of the Human Resource Services website regarding benefits available to operating staff employees.

#### G. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)

No report

#### H. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

No report

If you are on a university committee or commission, and you feel you have an important issue that affects the entire campus, contact OSC Secretary Stacey Bivens, and ask her to put you on the Operating Staff Council's meeting agenda.

### **XI. Prior Business**

None

### **XII. New Business**

#### A. Wage Increase Statement

Andree asked if all OSC members present has looked at the revised 3% increment statement that was previously discussed at the OSC's special meeting held on September 28, 2017. The revised statement is broader in scope. The council members were asked if anyone wanted to make a motion regarding the statement. A motion was made by Marjetic to discuss whether or not to send the statement as an open letter as written. The motion was seconded by Wielert and passed by unanimous vote. The floor was opened for discussion. There was extended discussion, during which many members had to leave, leaving the council with barely a quorum. A motion was made by Marjetic to take a vote. The motion was seconded by Nicholson. A vote was taken on whether to send the revised statement. The vote was 4/4. The president voted no to break the tie since there were barely enough council members present to make a quorum. A motion was made by Nicholson to put the revised statement out to the whole

council for an electronic vote to be completed by the end of the day, Tuesday, October 10, 2017. The motion was seconded by Marjetic and passed by unanimous vote. The revised statement will be sent to all council members asking for a yes or no vote.

**B. Volunteer for General Counsel Search Committee**

John Hulseberg volunteered to serve on this search committee with the OSC's approval.

**XIII. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Hulseberg to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Wielert and passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Frances Mitchell, acting Secretary  
Operating Staff Council