

**Minutes**  
**Operating Staff Council**  
September 6, 2018  
**Sky Room – 9:00 a. m.**

*Approved as Amended October 4, 2018*

*Present:* Rebekka Ayres, Dave Berg, Stacey Bivens, Ellen Cabrera, Angelica Gutierrez-Vargas, John Hulseberg, Natasha Johnson, Renee Kerwin, Cindy Kozumplik, Rave Meyer, Jay Monteiro, Holly Nicholson, Jeffry Royce, Nancy Skelley, Karen Smith, Jesse Tellez, Patricia Wielert, Debbie Williams

*Absent:* Katja Marjetic

*Guests:* Therese Arado, Cathy Doederlein, Hafsa Jamalvi, Sarah Klaper, Joyce Pusateri, Pulchratia Smith

**I. Call to Order**

President Nicholson called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:05 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Hulseberg to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by unanimous vote.

**IV. Approval of August 2, 2018, minutes**

A motion was made by Kozumplik to accept the August 2, 2018, minutes. The motion was seconded by Wielert and passed by unanimous vote.

**V. Treasurer's Report**

Wielert reported. Payments from July were added to the report. Deposited \$318.00 to the Operating Staff Dependent Endowed Scholarship Fund from dunk tank/pie toss. Wielert affirmed that Hulseberg will be paid in October. A motion was made by Kozumplik to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Williams and passed by unanimous vote. Because the July Treasurer's report was not approved, a motion was made by Monteiro to approve that report. The motion was seconded by K. Smith and passed by vote with one abstention.

## **VI. Visiting Committees/Guests**

Sarah Klaper, University Ombudsperson, shared her annual report at the OSC meeting. She started by talking about the “Kindness Rocks” project in which hopeful, kind messages are painted on rocks, which are then left around campus. Klaper explained that her office is confidential, neutral, informal and independent. She advocates for fair and equitably administered processes. The Ombudsperson is evaluated by the University Council. In the past year, there have been 704 complex cases, which are cases that require an appointment. In addition, there have been 82 simple referrals, and 16 cases in regard to policy development. Klaper has seen a 20% increase in usage of her office. She keeps track of the number of people who come numerous times on the same issue. Her office sees the same number of people as the University of Iowa. Some trends/concerns that Klaper sees are the budget and lack of respect from coworkers and supervisors. The work environment is causing physical stress. In Human Resource Services, the common concerns are the high turnover and dealing with layoffs. These issues take precedence over desk audits, which cause stress and anxiety for others. Lack of communication is a concern. Supervisors do not feel empowered to handle certain situations. The Ombudsperson also handles student concerns such as syllabi and unfair dismissal.

## **VII. Public Comment**

None

## **VIII. Announcements/Correspondence**

A. P. Smith reported. Health Services is still in negotiation with Northwestern to provide student healthcare. A tentative start date for a contract is January 1, 2019. A special board meeting will be held in November. Employees will have to be met with beforehand, and they need 30 days’ notice, so Smith does not believe a contract will be signed by the first of the year. Currently, positions in Human Resource Services are being filled. Civil Service classifications are being updated to ensure that there is not duplication of Civil Service and Supportive Professional Staff positions. She also stated that revisions are being made to the Office Support and Clerk series in order to merge them. Smith asks that employees who are contacted about this to please participate. It is a chance to have input. In response to a questions, Smith replied that she does not know what students are being told about the Health Services negotiations. In regard to employees, there are tips to help them prepare for exams. Clerks and Office Support will not have to test. Cabrera mentioned that she saw the phrase “salary commensurate with experience,” on NIU’s employment page, and wondered if this is a change in policy. Smith replied that new employees are not necessarily starting at the base salary. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has visited NIU regarding salary inequity, and the university is now on the

commission's radar.

B. Kozumplik reported that the planning committee for NIU's 125th anniversary will be meeting on September 12, 2018.

C. Sarah McGill, NIU's Chief Financial Officer, will be the guest at the OSC's November 1, 2018, meeting. Any questions for McGill can be given to Nicholson.

D. Nicholson reminded council members that Council of Councils takes place October 5, 2018, at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and said she would post information about registering for the event as soon as possible.

E. Nicholson shared an e-mail from The Graduate School calling for nominees for honorary doctorate degrees.

F. Nicholson reminded meeting attendees that the presidential search survey is due tomorrow, Friday, September 7, 2018, and that Cyber Security Awareness training must also be completed by September 7, 2018.

## **IX. Shared Governance Reports**

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

Jenna Mitchell, NIU's liaison in Springfield, talked about legislation. Discovery Partners Institute, the base of an innovative network was discussed. The network will have hubs, and NIU has been selected as one of these hubs. NIU will focus on two of the Institute's research areas: agriculture and food.

### **B. Faculty Senate**

Two members of the Board of Trustees attended the meeting in order to gather feedback regarding Dr. Freeman. Most of the feedback was concerned with the process of hiring Dr. Freeman as NIU's president. Royce spoke up at the meeting and shared the OSC's feedback and thoughts regarding Dr. Freeman.

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

Doederlein reported. Board of Trustees members visited the SPS Council meeting. The Council is very concerned about the ongoing process of transitioning SPS/AP positions to Civil Service. SPS Council is finalizing its plans for Board of Trustees member John Butler to attend their meeting in October.

#### D. University Council

No report

#### E. University Advisory Committee

No report

### **X. Committee Reports**

#### A. Civil Service Celebration

Wielert reported. There is a perception that the outdoor events were not as well-attended as in previous years. Should something else be considered for next year? It was decided that next year's Civil Service Celebration planning committee will determine what changes, if any, need to be made.

#### B. Elections and Appointments

Royce reported. The OSC constitution and bylaws are somewhat lacking in regard to guidance for handling OSC committee appointments, and he will refer this to the Legislative Committee. He announced that Monteiro is the second representative to the University Council, while Cabrera and Johnson are the University Council alternates. There were a number of committee vacancies, and Royce received applications for many of these. Royce read the application(s) for each committee vacancy, and the OSC voted.

##### 1. Campus Security Committee

Candidates: Cody Carter

M. Eugene Massey

A motion was made by Ayres to accept the candidates' applications. The motion was seconded by Wielert and passed by unanimous vote.

##### 2. Campus Parking Committee

Candidates: Cody Carter

Karen Smith

A motion was made by Hulseberg to accept the candidates' applications. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by unanimous vote.

##### 3. Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance Advisory Committee

Candidate: Stacey Bivens

A motion was made by Monteiro to accept the candidate's application. The motion was seconded by Williams and passed by unanimous vote.

#### C. Employee Morale

K. Smith is chair with Williams as chair in-training. The committee intends to continue to pursue the birthday proposal.

D. Legislative Committee  
Did not meet

E. Public Relations/Activities

K. Smith and Ayres are co-chairs. Meyer and Monteiro will serve as editors for the *Northern Staff News*. Staff are encouraged to send suggestions for the newsletter. The committee will be talking to other departments to find out what they do to boost morale.

F. Workplace Issues

Royce reported. Meyer was chosen as Chair, which brings up the question of whether an alternate can chair a committee. Royce recommended that the by-laws be tightened up. Workplace Issues discussed equity and treatment, and the belief that management training should be mandated. Brian Smith from the Employee Assistance Program is hitting roadblocks on that issue.

G. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)

Pusateri reported. APAC has one candidate to join their council.

H. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

Hulseberg reported. EAC meets October 3 at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. October 1st is the start of a 16-month period when “flagged” SPS/AP positions must be transitioned to Civil Service positions, so this will be a topic at the meeting.

## **XI. Prior Business**

None

## **XII. New Business**

A. Ideas for Guest Speakers

When asked for ideas, council members mentioned Brian Smith from the Employee Assistance Program, John Butler from the State Universities Civil Service System, Jeff Brownfield from the Merit Board, and John Heckmann of NIU Facilities Management and Campus Services.

B. OSC 2018-19 Goals

OSC President Nicholson presented a list of goals she would like the council to complete this fiscal year. She would like to conduct a survey of working conditions and communication, and then make a plan to address the findings of the survey. She would like to pinpoint employee morale issues, then create an

action plan to address them. Nicholson would also like to document advocacy and accomplishments and communicate them with campus. In additions, she would like to gather more feedback from the council's constituents, establish a plan for council community service, and create recommendations to Human Resource Services regarding communication and processes.

C. Skelley addressed council regarding the OSC polo shirts. She felt the shirts we have traditionally bought and worn are sized poorly, and she went to a sporting goods store in DeKalb, and had our logo put on a shirt she'd bought herself. She bought a shirt at a local retailer and is contacting places about the cost of having the embroidery done. She is still gathering information.

### **XIII. Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stacey Bivens, Secretary  
Operating Staff Council