Minutes
Operating Staff Council
October 3, 2019 (Approved November 7, 2019)
Sky Room – 9:00 a.m.


Absent: Rave Meyer, Holly Nicholson (on leave), Nancy Skelley, Debbie Williams

Guests: Cathy Doederlein, Dr. Lisa Freeman, Rebecca Hunt, Sarah Klaper, Ahyen Labanan, Miriah Ranken, Sabrina Self, Pulchratia Smith, Dr. Matt Streb, Kendall Thu

I. Call to Order
President Royce called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:02 a.m.

II. Roll Call
Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

III. Approval of Agenda
A motion was made by Ayres to accept the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Wielert and passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of September 5, 2019, minutes
A motion was made by Wielert to accept the September 5, 2019, minutes. The motion was seconded by Ayres and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer’s Report
Wielert reported. All outstanding bills have been paid, including expenses related to the latest edition of the Northern Staff News, and the Civil Service Celebration. A motion was made by Gutierrez-Vargas to approve the report. The motion was seconded by Ayres and passed by unanimous vote.

VI. Visiting Committees/Guests
A. Rebecca Hunt, University Policy Librarian
Hunt explained that the Policy Library has been operational for five months. She demonstrated how to make comments on the Policy Library webpage and informed the meeting attendees that the policy on managing university policy had been moved, and showed where that could be found. Hunt also showed how to submit or
revise a policy as a Word document by using a policy writing template. In order to leave comments about a policy, log in to Sharepoint, click on the policy itself and read it, then click in the comments area. No anonymous comments are accepted. Recently added or revised policy comments are sent back to the policy commenter for revisions, and then sent to the Policy Library Committee. Hunt emphasized that only university-wide policies belong in the Policy Library, and, if asked, she would make the determination whether something belongs there.

B. NIU President Dr. Lisa Freeman and Dr. Matt Streb
President Freeman started out by thanking the OSC for inviting her to speak at the meeting. She decided to use the questions submitted to her ahead of the meeting to frame her comments. Dr. Freeman was very heartened by our questions, because they highlighted the commitment that both administration and staff have in making NIU a great place for workers, and the impact of shared governance on campus. New Provost Beth Fisher Ingram and General Counsel Bryan Perry were both attracted to NIU by our mission, vision, and values statements, which convey who we are and who we want to be.

Royce asked how operating staff can contribute to student retention. Dr. Freeman said that positive interactions with staff are very important. There have been formal engagement sessions with staff and found out that there is no mechanism all about staff feedback. More comprehensive onboarding is taking place. New employees are learning more about what it means to be a Huskie. There is going to be more investment in staff development and personal growth. This does not necessarily mean leadership training, but asking what leadership looks like at different levels. A plan is being developed to enhance this concept. Dr. Freeman is in favor of degree compensation, however she is not in favor of a one-size-fits-all policy. There need to be guidelines with good expectations and communication. Dr. Freeman also talked about managing workloads in the face of tightening budgets, i.e., how to do less with less. It is okay to have good ideas that don’t work. The question is how to empower staff.

There were other questions and comments. Johnson asked about employee turnover and why some people stay at NIU while others leave quite quickly after being hired. Dr. Freeman replied that this is an important question which she would take back and think about. Berg commented that the skilled trades are paid the prevailing rate, which is reduced by the cost of benefits, which then makes it difficult to get new, outside employees. Streb revealed that Chris McCord has been studying Human Resource Services and its processes and would like to conduct process reengineering. It is easy for people to see each other as obstacles and not as collaborators. Reengineering is one of Dr. Freeman’s presidential goals for this year. Hulseberg
talked about shared governance, noting that participation has been encouraged and approved at the administrative level, but there is still resistance at the department level. Kozumplik asked about Dr. Freeman’s comment on doing less with less. Dr. Freeman would like to figure out how to do less with less and find ways to work without killing ourselves. Royce mentioned the expanded parental leave benefits package. Streb explained that only one of three universities has a benefits package like this. NIU has five weeks inclusive which covers birth, adoption, placing foster children, and elder care. Another benefit is the decision to cover differential tuition. This was a good idea that did not cost the university a lot of money.

VII. Public Comment
None

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence
A. Pulchratia Smith: Human Resource Services (HRS)
Smith reported. Melody Winter started at the HRS front desk on October 1, 2019. HRS has received approval for more HR staffing, but all hires must go through the Executive Budget Committee first. Fair Labor Standard Act increased the salary threshold which will go into effect January 1, 2020.

B. Cindy Kozumplik: NIU 125th Anniversary Activities
An oral history project has been put together, and it will be presented from 4:00 until 5:50 p.m., on Monday, December 9, 2019, in the Sky Room in the student center. At noon on Thursday, October 10, 2019, a sculpture will be dedicated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Commons.

C. 50th Anniversary of the Ombudsperson
Klaper announced that in honor of the Anniversary of the Ombudsperson on October 10, 2019, there will be Coffee with Klaper in her office from 8:00-10:30 a.m. that day. The kindness rocks will be available, and on Wednesday, October 9 there will be donuts and an O drawing.

D. Royce shared that he is a member of the Grievance Procedure Working Group, which is discussing staff not covered by bargaining agreements. This includes extra help and student employees. The group’s concerns are to reduce grievable issues and require a timeline to make reports.

IX. Shared Governance Reports
A. Board of Trustees
Discussed expanded parental leave. Payroll and Benefits are still working out the details. NIU is moving forward with the sale of excess real estate, including the
president’s residence, 11 acres of land in Sycamore, and the art annex. There was a large presence of faculty at the meeting. The vice-president of the faculty union made a presentation. A tentative agreement has been reached and has gone out to faculty. The vote on this agreement will take place the week of October 14, 2019.

B. Student Association (SA)
Sabrina Self reported. All director positions have been filled except for transportation. There are five new senators and the SA recognized four more organizations. The Student Association bylaws have been updated and can be seen on Huskie Link. The SA is ready to move and is sending its documents to archives. The Student Association is presenting “The State of the SA” at 7:30 p.m., on Monday, October 14, 2019, at the Campus Life Building.

C. Faculty Senate/University Council
Met October 2, 2019. Discussed revamping the structure of the shared governance system and talked about NIU’s system versus that at other universities. There is no University Council counterpart at other institutions. The University Council was asked if they wanted Kendall Thu to continue in his role of Executive Secretary of the University Council. The vote was yes. Two thirds of voting members must be present to change the structure of the University Council. Royce suggested that more operating staff be added. The Faculty Senate and Thu will bring more bylaws. They would like the University Council to vote by the end of the fiscal year.

D. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)
Doederlein reported. SPS Council discussed the agenda for its upcoming meeting. The council is pondering its future in the face of the SPS to Civil Service transitions. Currently, appropriate communication is vital.

E. University Council
See IX. C

F. University Advisory Committee (UAC)
Did not meet

X. Committee Reports
A. Elections and Appointments
Did not meet. Ayres resigned from the position of Parliamentarian, but will continue as a member of OSC. Kozumplik is now the OSC’s Parliamentarian.

Library Advisory Committee: Nancy Adams, who is a Library Operations Associate at Founders Library, applied for the position on the Library Advisory Committee. A motion was made by Kozumplik to accept Adams’ application. The
motion was seconded by Ayres and passed by unanimous vote.

B. Legislative Committee
Skelley was selected as chair. She is currently on leave, so Hulseberg is acting chair. The committee discussed how OSC bylaws and constitution can be changed, and enacting term limits for the executive board.

C. Public Relations/Activities
Met August 19, 2019. The committee felt the Civil Service Celebration went well. Talked about the Outstanding Service Award and how to handle the issue of employees who were Supportive Professional Staff then transitioned to Civil Service. Agreed if an employee has worked at NIU for seven years, their service should count. Have started to talk about next year’s Wellness Fair.

D. Workplace Issues
The committee met, but their chair was not present, so they didn’t know if they could hold their meeting. The committee members were assured they could meet without the chair.

E. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)
Ranken reported. APAC currently has 250 members. Also, there are four council member positions available on APAC. Molly Holmes will attend the next APAC meeting to talk about Ally Training. The annual Administrative Professionals Day Breakfast will take place Wednesday, April 22, 2020. Wielert added that they are looking for a speaker for the event and would prefer someone from campus.

F. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)
Hulseberg reminded OSC members that Council of Councils is taking place on Friday, October 18, 2019, at the University of Illinois at Chicago. It is hoped that as many OSC members as possible will be able to attend.

XI. Prior Business
A. Shared Governance Priorities and Goals
Royce read the list of priorities and goals which include clarification of job classifications and desk audits, addressing the equity gap (internal equity), and student recruitment, enrollment, and retention.

B. Restructuring of University Council and Faculty Senate
Royce would like the OSC to craft a resolution regarding the restructuring to submit with Kendall Thu’s.
XII. New Business
   A. Awards Luncheon
   OSC discussed changing the Awards Luncheon by making it into one event and sharing it with Supportive Professional Staff and Faculty, and switching it back to dinner. There were differing opinions on when to have the event: fall or spring. There were good arguments for both. Royce asked to have this discussion tabled until the November 7, 2019, OSC meeting and added to Prior Business.

   B. University Benefits Committee
   K. Smith reported. There will be no mid-year insurance choice period. The May benefits choice period will still occur. Increases to the premiums are expected.

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

   The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

   Respectfully submitted,
   Stacey Bivens, Secretary
   Operating Staff Council