

**Minutes**  
**Operating Staff Council**  
November 5, 2020  
**Teams – 9:00 a.m.**  
**Approved December 3, 2020**

***Present:*** Rebekka Ayres, Dave Berg, Patricia Gingrich, Angie Gutierrez-Vargas, Sandy Jakubiak, Natasha Johnson, Cindy Kozumplik, Jay Monteiro, Holly Nicholson, Tammie Pulak, Sara Richter, Jeffry Royce, Mary Schlagel, Nancy Skelley, Karen Smith, Lauren Teso-Warner, Tracey Ward, Debbie Williams, Linda Yates

***Guests:*** Bradley Beyer, Renata Catlett, Alan Clay, Cathy Doederlein, Lisa Freeman, John Hulseberg, Jory Keller, Sarah Klaper, Rebecca Leneau, Patricia Liberty-Baczek, Rave Meyer, Christine Monteiro, Latisha Newman, Daksha Patel, Miriah Ranken, Danielle Schultz, Pulchratia Smith, Matt Streb, Marzena Szymdt, Kendall Thu

**I. Call to Order**

President Johnson called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:01 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Attendance was recorded by Monteiro.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

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

**IV. Approval of October 1, 2020, Minutes**

Schlagel moved to accept the October 1, 2020, minutes. The motion was seconded by Skelley and passed by unanimous vote.

**V. Treasurer's Report**

Yates reported. The budget balance is currently \$9,424.54 with no expenditures this month. Nicholson made a motion to accept the report. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by unanimous vote.

**VI. Visiting Presenter:**

President Dr. Lisa Freeman (assisted by Chief of Staff/BOT Liaison Dr. Matt Streb)

Freeman read questions that were given her prior to the meeting and then answered the questions.

1. Fiscal overview of what NIU is doing to not owe \$30 million plus.  
She first clarified the difference between debt and deficit. Debt being owed money and deficit being projected to spend. Most of this spending is attributed to COVID-19 losses and expenses outweighing revenue driving streams. We have postponed planned purchases and capital projects, renegotiated existing contractual agreements, implemented voluntary pay cuts, taken difficult personnel actions. If we receive additional federal funding like in the spring it would be a significant help.
2. What is going on with NIU enrollment and its impact on the budget?  
Fall enrollment exceeded our target. This was the first increase in enrollment since 2008. There was a 1% increase overall. An 8% increase in freshman drove these numbers as did a 6% increase in first year retention rates.
3. How secure are operating staff jobs?  
We will not be initiating any additional layoffs this calendar year, but we may need to consider additional personnel adjustments later this fiscal year or next fiscal year. The state has said to be prepared for a 5-10% reduction in our budget.
4. Should operating staff be concerned about furloughs and will anyone be furloughed for 15 days in a row?  
We have neither ruled out or made a decision to implement furloughs. If we did decide to move forward with a furlough program, there would be advanced communication. Nobody would be furloughed for 15 consecutive days. We would structure the program so that the number of days would be tiered based on salary.
5. What led to the recent situation with Northwestern Medicine not accepting Healthlink OAP?  
Not sure what lead to it but NIU but Northwestern has found Healthlink OAP to not be a very good partner as far as communication and responsiveness. Northwestern is committed to making their physicians and providers available to NIU employees.

President Freeman then addressed the last budget e-mail that announced the 3% increment for unrepresented employees in the same message where it talked about the fact that we were losing some colleagues. She apologized if unnecessary pain

was caused but said that it hard to be honest and transparent and not cause some stress. They will try to be more mindful how they construct their messages in the future.

Skelley: Would married couples at NIU be taken into consideration so both are not furloughed at the same time?

President Freeman will take that thought back to the leadership team.

Kozumplik: Is there a time frame of furloughs?

No date has been set and no program is ready and waiting. If a program were enacted, it would be a claw back if we did not receive adequate state and federal funding from COVID-19. Streb commented on how important it is for NIU to receive the federal stimulus money.

Skelley: Will the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program (VRIP) be offered again?

They do not have any plans to repeat the program. Streb posted in the chat that 76 staff members and 21 faculty had taken advantage of the VRIP.

Johnson: Commented on being careful of holiday spending as we are unsure of NIU future. She reminded that the students are our number one priority.

Royce: Commented that he was grateful that the Healthlink OAP information was sent out. He thought the communication should have gone out to the entire campus to alleviate confusion. He also made a comment that he wanted to make sure that in a furlough implementation that salaried employees were not being taken advantage of by working extra hour on other days to make up for work not done on furlough days. President Freeman thanked him for the reminder.

Kozumplik pointed out to President Freeman that she was receiving praise for her efforts in the chat. In response, Freeman thanked everyone for showing up, supporting our students, and keeping everything running.

Meyer: Eliminating spring break and replacing with 2 days off... what was the decision for the first one to be a Thursday and not a Friday allowing for two three-day weekends?

The purpose of canceling spring break was to minimize the opportunities for people to travel and mingle and bring COVID-19 back to NIU. The Thursday was used rather than two Mondays, or Fridays was to lessen the

impact on Monday, Wednesday, Friday classes. Royce thanked President Freeman for advocating for staff in reminding leaders that staff would be getting this time off when they do not normally.

Ward: If an employee chooses to go out of state to a COVID high state, knowingly, are they allowed to use the 10 quarantine days offered by NIU.

Royce responded that it does not matter if you went knowingly. If you follow the quarantine guidelines you can apply for the extended quarantine days for a one-time use if needed.

Skelley: Do you have to have a negative COVID test before returning?

Royce responded that he did not believe you had to have an additional test once the symptoms subside.

## **VII. Public Comment**

None

## **VIII. Announcements/Correspondence**

### **A. Natasha Johnson: President's Announcements**

The ad hoc Social Justice Committee for the Faculty Senate met on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Institutional racism was discussed as well as how to increase diversity at NIU. Faculty Senate met on October 28<sup>th</sup> and spring break was discussed regarding the two days that staff will also receive this year.

### **B. Pulchratia Smith: Human Resource Services**

Communication will be coming out about specialty factors, what they are and how to add them to position advertisements. HR is doing their best to communicate changes to the campus as quickly as possible. Smith says she is a rule follower but shares as much information as she is allowed and done with compassion and understanding as there are people at the end of the decision even though it is a business decision.

### **C. Cindy Kozumplik: NIU 125th Anniversary Committee**

No report.

## **IX. Shared Governance Reports**

### **A. Faculty Senate**

Thu reported. They approved the charge of the Social Justice Committee. The committee is composed of 12 members. Ismael Montana from history is the chair of the committee. The committee is broken down into three groups: institutional racism, academic affairs, diversity, equity, and inclusion. A mental health presentation was given by Brad Beyer. Thu, Beyer and Kelly Wesener

Michael are working on creating a statement to be used in syllabi regarding mental health resources on campus.

**B. University Council (UC)**

Thu reported. UC met November 4<sup>th</sup>. Sarah Klaper gave her annual Ombudsperson report. A committee, chaired by Katie Jaekel from Counseling, Adult and Higher Education, has been formed to review her performance and will be given in the spring. CFO Sarah Chinniah and Provost Beth Ingram gave a budget report. This included communication and process flow. It was mentioned that the Healthlink OAP information should have gone out to all of campus and that Faculty Union was not notified either. Royce added information about that October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. UC approved the 2022 holiday calendar and the adjustments to the 2021 spring break calendar for 2021. There will be free COVID-19 testing in the parking lot of Anderson Hall on November 16, 17, and 18<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There will be a four to seven day turn around on results. There will be a round table at 5:00 p.m. November 5<sup>th</sup>. There is a list on the NIU calendar of exact topics. There was a call for Operating Staff feedback on the IBHE Master Plan. The draft is on the IBHE website. Linda Saborío from Foreign Language and Literature will take comments.

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

No report

**D. Student Government Association (SGA)**

No report.

**E. Board of Trustees**

No report.

**F. University Advisory Council (UAC)**

No report

**X. Committee Reports**

**A. Elections and Appointments**

Monteiro reported. There is still one opening in the Campus Parking Committee to be filled. Monteiro reached out to a person who had expressed interest, but they have not filled out an interest form yet. There was discussion of having more advertising of committee openings in the future to have greater participation and to try and get the vacancies filled sooner. Meyer presented at the PR Committee to do more articles or blurbs in the newsletter. There was more review of electronic voting used in past elections. The committee is looking at

Google Forms, and taking another look at Microsoft Forms and see how it may be revamped. The pros and cons of each were discussed. Discussion will continue at the next meeting after more investigation. Schlagel was elected as the OSC representative to the new NIU Police-Citizen Advisory Group. Sandy Jakubiak will be her alternate.

#### B. Legislative Committee

Nicholson reported. A first reading of changes to Article II was given. It is basically a general clean up: some capitalization, OSC members must constitute a majority of the membership of each OSC standing committees, changing the name of the name of the Workplace Issues Committee to the Workplace Guidance Committee, adding the parliamentarian to the membership of the Legislative Committee. A first reading of changes to Constitution Article 5.2 and Bylaws Article 8.22 was given. This is a change to the OSC presidential term from one year to two. And if the president is elected in the last year of their three-year term, they will be allowed to stay on one year longer to complete their presidential term. A second reading of Bylaw Article 5 and 6 was given. This is to clean up information about the OSC year and meetings, how absences should be reported, and what happens if the president is incapacitated or if the president needed to be removed the vice-president would be enabled to call these meetings. Monteiro asked for clarification of 5.2 regarding wording of voting on time and place of meetings. Angie Gutierrez-Vargas made a friendly amendment to the wording saying: At the first meeting following elections, OSC members shall vote on the schedule *for the fiscal year*. Then striking *and location of each meeting*. The motion was seconded by Kozumlik and passed by unanimous vote. Nicholson moved that with the friendly amendment and the understanding the subsequent articles will be renumbered to approve the bylaw changes. The motion was seconded by Monteiro. A Polly poll was taken, and the motion passed with 15 yes votes and one abstention.

#### C. Public Relations/Activities

K. Smith reported. The committee is looking to put more blurbs/advertisements in the newsletter for OSC representation on university committees. We are also looking for more “rookies” to interview for the newsletter. The committee is looking for a fun virtual activity for operating staff to do. We are looking at doing a contest. If all approvals are had, it will be coming out in the next newsletter. We are gearing up for the dependent scholarship. Spread the word.

#### D. Workplace Guidance

Yates reported. Workplace guidance met on October 28<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the uplifting messages of Council of Councils. The keynote speaker was a surgeon from SIU School of Medicine. Linda will send out links to books he recommended. There was an update from Larry Curtis of SURS and Linda Brookhart from the State Universities Annuitants Association. Jeff Brownfield from the State Universities Civils Service System (SUCSS) discussed how to calculate seniority. If you have questions about seniority, feel free to contact Jeff. If you need any contact information for these speakers or information on the informational books used at Council of Councils, please contact Yates.

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

Ranken reported. They are still working with Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Education regarding the PeopleAdmin solutions review. They are on target to finish the review of recruitment policies among different employment categories by mid-December. They are also working with Dr. Chris McCord to get a processes user survey put out. They are looking at advancing efficiencies across campus with different workflows and policies. The goal is to help NIU prioritize their efforts.

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

Hulseberg reported. EAC met on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. SIU School of Medicine HR director Theresa Smith spoke. She talked about the furlough program they had implemented on their campus. Employees had between August and December to take 10 days. Employees worked with supervisors to find the best days. For non-civil service employees, they used a payroll deduction to equal the dollar amount of 10 days. The four collective bargaining units on campus supported this. AFSCME had offered to take the maximum 15 days. Everyone was willing to support it to save their co-workers jobs. The next Merit Board meeting will be December 10<sup>th</sup>. NIU has no discharge proceedings scheduled. Trustee John Butler will be there. SUCSS presented their annual budget. They had a 10% reduction in budget for FY21. They are going to ask for \$127,000 more in FY22, about an 18% increase. That will all be for staff hiring. The emergency rule that extended probations that was put in place during COVID-19 expired for all campuses in September. We are back to regular probations of six to 12 months. An update of total numbers of civil service employees has gone up and this is directly linked to Supportive Professional Staff employees migrating to civil service. Council of Council's success and their focus on self-care and wellness was discussed. K. Smith asked if SIU had shared data on the savings for the furlough program. Hulseberg said they had not but was sure T. Smith would be probably be willing to

provide that information after the end of the year. Hulseberg offered to invite her to speak to OSC.

#### **XI. Prior Business**

OSC Committee Chairs. This is regarding non-OSC members to chair a sub-committee. Legislative Committee talked about this and decided it was OK. Council approval will be tabled pending approval of the change to Article II.

#### **XII. New Business**

##### **A. OSC President's Term of Office**

Council approval will be tabled also pending approval of the change to Article II.

**B.** Schlagel asked what the procedure was for providing OSC pictures for the website. Johnson responded that if the NIU photographer had taken your picture, to e-mail the one you like best to her. If you had not had a new picture taken, web design will use your old picture in the new rotating banner.

#### **XIII. Adjournment:**

Skelley moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Nicholson and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Jay Monteiro

Respectfully submitted,  
Stacey Bivens, Secretary  
Operating Staff Council