

**Minutes  
Operating Staff Council  
October 1, 2020  
Teams – 9:00 a.m.  
**Approved November 5, 2020****

**Present:** Rebekka Ayres, Dave Berg, Stacey Bivens, Patricia Gingrich, Angie Gutierrez-Vargas, Sandy Jakubiak, Natasha Johnson, Cindy Kozumplik, Frances Mitchell (Administrative Aide), 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, Sarah Carli, Renata Catlett, Ashley Dwy, Vernese Edghill-Walden, Evan Forbes, Liz Guess, Vicky Guzman, John Hulseberg, Sarah Klaper, Rave Meyer, Rolf Oxnevad, Daksha Patel, Miriah Ranken, Kristin Sherman, Brian Smith, Roslyn Snell, Marzena Szmydt, Kendall Thu, Jenna Villani

**I. Call to Order**

President Johnson called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:00 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

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

**IV. Approval of September 3, 2020, Minutes**

Nicholson moved to accept the September 3, 2020, minutes. The motion was seconded by Yates and passed by unanimous vote.

**V. Treasurer's Report**

Yates reported. The budget balance is currently \$9,462.54 and reflects \$38.00 spent on nametags for new members. Williams made a motion to accept the report. The motion was seconded by Gutierrez-Vargas and passed by unanimous vote.

**VI. Visiting Presenters:**

Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden, along with Liz Guess, Vicky Guzman, Brian Smith and Roslyn Snell, from Human Resource Services (HRS) were visitors at the OSC meeting.

Guess discussed Protecting the Pack and the process for employees who are experiencing COVID symptoms. She shared the website which gives workers information on how to proceed if they feel ill: [www.niu.edu/protecting-the-pack/index](http://www.niu.edu/protecting-the-pack/index). There are sick leave options on the HRS website. Student employees can apply for Family First, which is a one-time benefit. Workers who are already on FMLA would have to use 12 days of sick leave before they can access the 187.5 hours of leave time.

B. Smith provided information for the next flu shot clinic, which is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The appointment times are five minutes long and face masks are required.

Edghill-Walden gave work force updates. She explained that COVID has had a major impact on the university's budget and 101 actions have been taken on civil service positions. These include temporary and permanent lay-offs and bumping. Even moving into an empty position is considered bumping. Altogether, 17 employees bumped and 84 were laid off. Fourteen staff participated in VRIP (Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan) over the summer. Nine employees were recalled/re-employed. There were two Supportive Professional Staff non-renewals.

She continued by saying that new employee onboarding orientation is now online. This includes videos, information on insurance, employee training and reference information on pension choices with SURS. Also, there is now free guest parking at HRS. This was a concern expressed by people who were worried about receiving a ticket while taking tests at HRS. Huskies Get Hired is the new student employment portal where departments can post available student positions.

To be as paperless as possible, the I-9 verification form is now electronic. The I-9 is a federal form filled out for new hires which proves the employee is eligible to work.

There are several affirmative action and accessibility initiatives. The members of the Accessibility Prioritization Committee are Roslyn Snell, John Heckmann, Deb Miller and Belinda Roller. The Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Education (AAEOE) website has a link to report different types of accessibility barriers. This office is located on the fourth floor of Health Services. They have been working with APAC (Administrative Professionals Advisory Council) writing recruiting guides for five different types of NIU employees. These are executive level searches (which require search firms), faculty, supportive

professional staff, civil service and extra help/temporary assignments. They want to complete the guides in December.

On the topic of training and professional development, there is a plan to organize and join the collective resources and talents across campus into a single unit, then further develop leadership and supervisor training opportunities.

Edghill-Walden announced an Art and Soul Project, Art for Social Justice, which is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m.

## **VII. Public Comment**

None

## **VIII. Announcements/Correspondence**

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

Johnson went over the list of guests for the next several months:

November: President Freeman

December: Dr. Edgehill-Walden/ Pulchratia Smith

January: Matt Streb

February: Sarah Chinniah

March: Chief Phillips

April: John Heckmann

There is no one currently scheduled for May. If there are questions for any of these people, please send them to Frances Mitchell, with a copy to S. Bivens.

Johnson also reported on the 3% increase for non-represented employees.

### B. Pulchratia Smith: Human Resource Services

No report

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

Kozumplik reported. The rest of the 125th Anniversary activities will all be virtual events. On November 4, there will be an IT presentation about bringing information technology to the university.

D. K. Smith announced that Ethics Training had opened and would take place from October 1 through 31. Cyber Training is also ongoing.

## **IX. Shared Governance Reports**

### A. Board of Trustees

Johnson reported. Cathy Doederlein, president of SPS Council, spoke on behalf of non-represented employees who received a 3% increment, remarking that it showed that the university cares about wages. On the subject of budget issues and constraints, the university's budget deficit has decreased from \$39 million to around \$32 million because of a 1% increase in enrollment.

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

Beyer reported. The SGA has been busy. They have approved a budget and are getting back to where they should be. They have been working with shared governance. The SGA did undergo a budget cut of around \$250,000. Activity money is going to students, but in a different way.

**C. Faculty Senate**

The results of an anti-racism survey were shared, with diversify faculty at the top of the list. There has been an increase in the number of African American and Latinx students, but not faculty. An Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee has been formed with Professor Ismael Montana as chair. There is a proposal before the University Council to do away with spring break in spring semester 2021 to protect against/prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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

No report

**E. University Council**

Johnson reported. There was a presentation on sexual misconduct. A committee to review the Ombudsperson was established. She had the opportunity to share our collective uncertainty about the university's financial situation and its effect on job security and how difficult it would be to find another job. What is the timeline and plan to reduce NIU's debt?

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

No report

**X. Committee Reports**

**A. Elections & Appointments**

Monteiro reported. The committee met September 15, and the members are Bivens, R. Meyer, Royce and K. Smith. The Star System was used for the OSC election in spring and it was problematic. For example, there was no way to choose zero stars for a candidate. Royce is looking into using Google Forms for future elections. The Campus Parking Committee is missing one member. There is an

operating staff member interested in the position, but they have not yet filled out an interest form. The Legislative Committee elected a non-OSC member to be Chair of the committee and there is a question whether this is allowed. Johnson sent out the Athletic Board meeting report. Virtual Homecoming will be held on October 10. E. Forbes has information about a different election system.

#### B. Legislative Committee

Nicholson reported. The committee did a complete review of the Bylaws. Article 5 was brought into Article 6. They discussed the OSC's year and meetings. There was a question about how absentee members are removed from the Council. Royce asked that this issue to be added to the Executive Committee's meeting agenda. Kozumplik made a motion to table discussion about the OSC President's Term of Office until the November meeting. The motion was seconded by Royce and passed by unanimous vote.

#### C. Public Relations/Activities

No report

#### D. Workplace Guidance

Yates reported. The committee met September 23. M. Ranken attended. There was discussion about how the committee can better serve its constituents and reinstituting the Morale Committee and APAC. They discussed the amount of crime reported in the 800-900 blocks of Hillcrest and Ridge in DeKalb and considered asking that NIU Police Chief Phillips be invited to an OSC meeting. Yates did advise everyone to download the NIUSafe app if they had not already done so.

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

Ranken reported. As stated earlier in the minutes (**VI.**), APAC has been working with the Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Education (AAEOE) office on recruitment guidelines. A survey was completed by Administrative Professionals and the results had the common themes of software training, SharePoint and Microsoft Teams. The Employee Assistance Program is holding quarterly training. Kozumplik will be doing electronic requisitions training.

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

Hulseberg reported. The next EAC meeting is October 22. The Council of Councils is scheduled for Friday, October 23, at SIU School of Medicine at Springfield. However, no registration information has been sent out yet. He will keep us updated.

**XI. Prior Business**

**XII. New Business**

A. Fund for Workers

There was discussion about the idea of creating a special fund for civil service employees who are going through a rough time.

B. OSC Committee Chairs

E. Forbes was chosen by the Legislative Committee to be Chair. It is not clear that Forbes, as a non-OSC member, is eligible to be chair. Royce made a motion to task the Legislative Committee with adjusting the OSC Bylaws to allow non-OSC members to serve as OSC committee chairs. Additionally, [he moved] to allow committees to elect said members in the interim until the Legislative Committee can produce new language for the Council's consideration. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik. A voice vote was taken, with 14 ayes, 1 nay and 2 abstentions.

**XIII. Adjournment:**

Kozumplik moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Williams and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stacey Bivens, Secretary  
Operating Staff Council