

Operating Staff Council
July Regular Meeting Minutes
Virtual Teams Meeting
July 1, 2021, 9:00 a.m.
Approved August 5, 2021

Present: Rebekka Ayres, Zac Birch, Patricia Gingrich, Angie Gutierrez-Vargas, John Hulseberg, Sandy Jakubiak, Natasha Johnson, Sarah Klaper, Cindy Kozumplik, Rave Meyer, Frances Mitchell (Administrative Aide), Jay Monteiro, Kathy Mosher, Holly Nicholson, David Rapp, Sara Richter, Jeffry Royce, Mary Schlagel, Jim Slagstad, Lauren Teso-Warner, Tracey Ward, Linda Yates

Guests: Felicia Bohanon, Peter Chomentowski, Patricia Erickson, Liz Guess, Pulchratia Lacey, Christine Monteiro

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I. Call to Order

Johnson called the July regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:00 a.m. and began the recording of the virtual Teams meeting.

II. Roll Call

Attendance was recorded by Mitchell.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of June 3, 2021, Minutes

Kozumplik made a motion to accept the June 3, 2021, minutes. The motion was seconded by Schlagel and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer's Report

Yates reported the FY22 budget is the same as last fiscal year. OSC has a balance of \$9462.54. There were no updates on the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship Award. An update from Robin Kenney should be provided to the Treasurer for the regular August meeting. The Civil Service Celebration budget of \$7204.54 will not be used for the celebration event this year. Royce made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Forbes and passed by unanimous vote.

VI. Visiting Presenters & Guests

No visiting guests presented.

VII. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence

A. President's Announcements - Natasha Johnson

Johnson is not seeking reelection to the President position on the OSC. Johnson graduated this Spring semester with a Master of Business Administration, Johnson's 2nd Master's degree. Nicholson also graduated this past semester with a Master's degree. Johnson suggested to all attending operating staff to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the University to further their education. Johnson thanked everyone for their support in Johnson's year as President and for the congratulations shared in the chat.

B. Human Resource Services - Pulchratia Lacey

- The newly hired Chief Human Resources Officer is William Hodson begins August 1.
- Plans are ongoing to move Human Resource Services (HRS) from its current location to somewhere more central on campus. Originating from a [Report](#) created by consultant Audrey Southard. HRS is still working mostly in a remote capacity with some exceptions, including Civil Service Testing.
- The HRS Office is still trying to fill their vacancies in staffing. Some internal department movement of employees to other positions has been on-going.
- The [Affirmative Action](#) role for the University is returning to HRS as of July 1, 2021.
- The Civil Service system office has scheduled an audit for August but HRS has requested it be moved to September since August is such a busy time for HRS to be in the middle of an audit.
- The University Civil Services System Executive Director, Jeff Brownfield, has retired as of June 30, 2021. Gail Schiesser has been appointed [Interim Executive Director](#).

Questions Asked:

- Royce questioned if leaving the testing center in its current location has been considered for the benefit of parking. Smith confirmed they have kept parking as part of the on-going discussion and has been advocating for leaving the

testing section at the present location primarily because of the available parking. Parking meters have been removed from the current lot with help from Vernese Edghill-Walden.

- Nicholson questioned if the HRS reporting structure changes were ongoing. Smith confirmed that it has changed, in part due to Southard's Report, and that HRS reports directly to the President's Office as of July 1, 2021.
- Nicholson questioned when an employee of the Clerical Union know what their increment is, in regard to the university's wage increases for FY22. Meyer asked that the employee be directed to discuss with Meyer.

C. Council Spotlight

At today's meeting, Yates recognized Nicholson for being visible and inspiring as OSC President in past years, work in OSC Committees, and inspiring Yates to join the council. Mitchell turned the spotlight on Kozumplik for working as Parliamentarian and especially for outstanding contributions to the Civil Service Celebration year after year.

IX. Shared Governance Reports

A. Board of Trustees (BOT)

Chomentowski reported that he sat in on the June 17 BOT meeting with Kendall Thu, then President of the Senate. Definitions of faculty through five categories for NIU Bylaws and Faculty Senate Bylaws were approved. Chomentowski spoke about the budget which is in better shape than expected coming out of a year dealing with COVID-19. The BOT bid farewell to Kendall Thu, (21 years) and Catherine Doederlein, Supportive Professional Staff (SPS) President, who is moving from SPS to Civil Service. Chomentowski supported Johnson's suggestion of having OSC elections sooner so outgoing members could be recognized. He mentioned Royce's, membership on the Social Justice Committee, which will be meeting regularly once a month.

B. Faculty Senate

Chomentowski is the newly elected Faculty Senate President and chair of University Council as of July 1, 2021. Chomentowski plans to continue work on the Social Justice Committee. Chomentowski emphasized the importance of that committee's work and its subgroups. Chomentowski suggested the committee establish five priorities and take one or two of those to focus on to see what we can do to change things. Chomentowski also spoke about the need to change student evaluations of faculty, looking for a better way. Chad McEvoy, Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs, is also looking into the evaluations issue. Chomentowski would also like to focus on increase the faculty

evaluations filled out, up to at least of 75% of each class, to have a statistical advantage in determining positive and negatives. Johnson added we are excited to have Chomentowski and reminded everyone that when things are important, they are not easy.

C. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)

Bohanon, President with SPSC, is still learning the role. Bohanon is currently the VP as well as the President. SPSC welcomes newly elected members during their meeting July 8, 2021. They expect to have their officer elections in August. Their Constitution and Elections Committee is working on constitutional language regarding presidential succession. Bohanon is anticipating a thin agenda for next week's SPSC meeting and expects the Council will move into setting priorities for the year.

D. Student Government Association (SGA)

No report was given.

E. University Council

Royce reported that the University Council does not meet over the summer. The next meeting is September 8, 2021.

X. Committee Reports

A. Elections and Appointments

The nomination deadline for OSC Executive Committee elections was June 25. Monteiro contacted each nominee to confirm their acceptance of their nominations. Royce set up the ballots for the election using Microsoft Teams. The Committee discussed moving the election and selection of officers from July. The Committee decided to wait as Faculty Senate and University Council are adjusting their bylaws to also operating staff representatives to rotate yearly. Appointments are currently a three-year term. The Committee discussed the creation of the State Universities Retirement System Members Advisory Committee (SURSMAC), and that the appointment of a member from NIU can come from SPS Council or OSC. The two Presidents are expected to get together and discuss that appointment.

Monteiro demonstrated the OSC Committees List, an Excel Workbook, which makes available for any operating staff to sign-up for the committees and sub-committees of the OSC.

Monteiro solicited interest in two University committees: Campus Security and Environmental Quality has two openings, and the Campus Parking Committee has two openings. Monteiro urged anyone interested to go to the website, complete an [interest form](#) and submit it to the Council office and they will bring that to the next Council meeting for approval.

Monteiro thanked everyone for their help, Johnson for helping put together the form, Royce for creating ballot, Kozumplik for the election committee flow chart, as well as all of the Elections and Appointments committee members: Bivens, Meyer, Smith, Royce; and Mitchell for administrative help. Meyer voiced that they are looking for anyone interested in becoming the newsletter editor.

President Johnson expressed appreciation to Monteiro for all of the excellent work done by Monteiro. Johnson said, *“everything you have done Jay, has not gone unnoticed.”*

Going forward, the Elections Committee and the Executive Committee will be reviewing an orientation program for all new OSC members about the ins and outs of what being on council is like, the different committees, how you communicate. This information will go out to new members before the August meeting. Any councilmembers who have items to add, what they wish they had known upon joining the Council, they will incorporate to the training.

1. Committee Appointments

Stacey Bivens submitted a packet for a nomination to the Libraries Advisory Committee. Nicholson motioned to accept Biven’s nomination, seconded by Kozumplik. OSC representatives voted unanimous approval for appointing Stacey Bivens to the Libraries Advisory Committee.

2. Executive Committee Elections

a. President

Monteiro asked for any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Monteiro asked for a motion to close the nominations for president. So moved by Kozumplik, seconded by Meyer. Each candidate for President made the following summarized remarks:

Holly Nicholson: *“I am intimidated to be nominated behind Natasha but honored and really excited. I have served as past president—I love this role—I formed good relationships with leadership and I am very*

motivated to keep moving forward. While we are still in a challenging time, I have led through hard times before during the Baker-Freeman transition and the 700-day budget impasse. I am ready for it. I bring resources from my division. I am very excited to be nominated. My top goal is to codify the Personnel Advisor, continuing our work on establishing procedures, and partnering with leadership to move the university forward in terms of efficiency and prioritizing staff. Thank you for the nominations.”

Jeffry Royce: *“I was very grateful to accept this nomination, the recognition alone is always quite meaningful. I continue to find fulfillment in advocating for people and asking tough questions during inconvenient times. I always strive to do so in ways that are forceful enough but not too forceful. Walking that line is exhausting but it is one of my strengths, I always strive to keep my weaknesses in mind and I am happy to reach out to others for help. Our staff face lingering COVID concerns, career stagnation, work-life balance, and many HR grievances. I will focus on building a relationship with the new HR officer and continuing our council initiatives we started this year and looking a bit more professional to our constituents.”*

Council representatives elected Holly Nicholson for OSC President for a two-year term. President Johnson turned the gavel over to Nicholson.

Monteiro asked Kozumplik to make a note to update the election procedures to include sending the ballot out ahead of the July meeting.

b. Vice President

Monteiro asked for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Monteiro asked for a motion to close the nomination. So moved by Birch, seconded by Schlagel. Council representatives elected Jeffry Royce for Vice President.

c. Secretary

President Johnson recognized that Secretary candidate Forbes asked to say a few words. Monteiro found that acceptable after nominations had been closed. Monteiro asked for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Monteiro asked for a motion to close the nomination. So moved by Kozumplik, seconded by Meyer. Monteiro allowed Forbes to make the following summarized statement:

“I am very interested the secretary and parliamentary positions. I am interested in digging into and understanding the OSC. The secretary position offers an opportunity to listen and participate with the executive committee to make improvements for the council as a whole.”

Forbes relayed note taking experience and employs a factual approach. Forbes expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak on his own behalf. Council representatives elected Evan Forbes for Secretary.

d. Treasurer

Monteiro asked for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Monteiro asked for a motion to close the nomination. Kozumplik so moved, seconded by Royce. Royce raised a Point of Order that the previous voting had resulted in 18 votes from 17 councilmembers, though the extra vote had no effect on the results. Earlier in the meeting Kozumplik recognized Richter as a voting member due to Ayers initial absence. Voting continued before a resolution was reached. Council representatives re-elected Linda Yates for Treasurer.

e. Parliamentarian.

Monteiro asked for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Monteiro asked for a motion to close the nomination. Kozumplik so moved, seconded by Johnson. Monteiro offered for any nominees to make a statement. Kozumplik stated interest in continuing as parliamentarian with supporting the online meeting format and working on orientation program for new members. Council representatives re-elected Cindy Kozumplik for Parliamentarian.

B. Legislative Committee

Nicholson reported the committee did not meet in June because they were waiting for the election cycle to complete so they can update the pertinent bylaws. This committee will be meeting in the month of July.

C. Public Relations and Activities Committee

Monteiro reported that there will not be a staff-fest celebration this summer.

D. Workplace Guidance Committee

Yates gave special thanks to Ombudsperson, Sarah Klapner, a valuable member of the Committee and the University. This Committee is scheduling a meeting in the first week of August to meet with Pulchratia Smith, Vernese Edghill-Walden, Greg Brady, John Hulseberg, and others. The meeting is to try to formalize some kind of automated process on how HRS will deal with the decrease in administrative professionals, audits, and additional pay. The Committee is receiving reports from the people that end up with work from vacant positions that there is no help in sight.

The Committee is working with NIU Child Development and Family Center on the possibility of a sliding scale for employees based on their pay. The Committee hopes to get a report to the Council in the near future.

The Committee has received some feedback about the University's decision to require weekly surveillance testing for employees, with those [providing proof of vaccination](#) eligible to be exempted. Some concerns have been raised about the confidentiality of the records, the Committee received assurance from Miriah Ranken in HRS that they are kept separately and confidentially. There was discussion about the verbiage of the email describing disciplinary actions, as a result of non-participation, rubbing employees the wrong way.

E. [Administrative Professionals Advisory Council \(APAC\)](#)

No report was given.

F. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

No report was given for EAC. The July meeting will be virtual. The annual Council of Councils will be at Northeastern Illinois University in October, and it will hopefully be in person. Hulseberg will forward the information to Nicholson to submit to the Council.

Hulseberg congratulated all newly elected members and officers and expressed sadness for the leaving members. He encouraged them to continue to attend the OSC meetings to continue making contributions.

G. Civil Service Emergency Fund (CSEF)

Nicholson reported that the CSEF is on the Foundation website and the OSC fund was included in the Huskies United event. OSC will begin taking applications when the account has raised \$2,500.00. OSC will limit the grant

amount to \$250.00 and the Committee will remain flexible on meeting quickly in response to emergency requests for assistance. The Committee has plans to share a Cornfest booth with HR and participate in the Wellness Fair. The Committee also discussed what incentive could be offered to large donors. Applications will go to cs-fund@niu.edu. Donations can be made at the Foundation [website](#).

XI. Prior Business

A. Remote Working Task Group

Nicholson reported that the technology sub-group had not met in June, and was not present for the May meeting.

Johnson reported a sub-group met yesterday, June 30. Other sub-group's leadership were joining Johnson's sub-group for that meeting. They are working on language to be more concise in defining terms, such as remote working and telework. They will be submitting their draft on July 1 to Senior Leadership to review for red flags, acceptance, or rejection. Forbes asked for a Point of Information, whether the draft would be visible to anyone wishing to see it and learn what was considered. The draft will not be visible to the public.

Ward reported a sub-group submitted their items as well for the July 1 draft.

Gutierrez-Vargas reported the Student Experience sub-group met June 21. They reviewed PCSW survey numbers again and those present discussed some confusion with their purpose. The chair was going to follow-up with the main chairs and then they were going to regroup.

Nicholson clarified that the task groups were now closed to new members.

B. Operating Staff Personnel Advisor

To be addressed in fall.

XII. New Business

Catherine Doederlein has officially stepped down from SPS Council and other committees requiring SPS employment status. Nicholson wanted to give recognition for all of Doederlein's hard work for this university and SPS Council. Nicholson welcomed Felicia Bohannon as current President of the SPSC. Nicholson also recognized Ombudsperson Sarah Klaper, leaving the position to work with Northwestern, as an incredible person and a great advocate. Nicholson thanked Monteiro for working as Vice President of the OSC. Meyer asked Nicholson to send notes for the newsletter.

XIII. Adjournment

Kozumplik moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Johnson and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan Forbes, Secretary
Operating Staff Council