

Minutes
Operating Staff Council
May 6, 2021
Teams – 9:00 a.m.

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: Sarah Carli, Renata Catlett, Nick Coffman, Cathy Doederlein, Evan Forbes, Christopher Gilbert, Aubrey Hense, John Hulseberg, Yvonne Johnson, Meg Junk, Krystyna Kamka, Sarah Klaper, Beatrice Kooken, Caroline Kosmel, Lauren Kurpius, Laura Lagreid, Laura Lundelius, Chris McCord, Elizabeth Mehren, Rave Meyer, Christine Monteiro, Daksha Patel, Mark Pietrowski, Miriah Ranken, Marzena Szmydt, 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 Bivens.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of April 1, 2021, Minutes

Nicholson made a motion to accept the April 1, 2021, minutes. The motion was seconded by Kozumplik and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer's Report

Yates reported. A new Dell desktop computer was purchased for Mitchell at a cost of \$1930.14. This left a balance of \$7243.40. Royce asked if the cost was split with the SPS Council. Yates said no, they did not have the funds. Ward made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Nicholson and passed by unanimous vote.

VI. Visiting Presenters & Guests

Chris McCord gave a presentation entitled, “Advancing Administrative Efficiency.” A charge was made in February 2020 by President Freeman to streamline the university. Then COVID struck and employees began working from home. There was a need to go to digitization and automating processes. As people are receiving their vaccinations, the need for flexible work environments remains and will become NIU’s new normal. Prioritizing projects for efficiency was an inclusive process. Two surveys were conducted, seven leadership groups were consulted, and 80 individuals were contacted. Seventy-four projects were identified, evaluated, and prioritized into five categories, with 21 projects ready for implementation. Projects were also divided into three tiers: I (high), II (middle) and III (low). Focus will be on Tier I (high priority) projects first. The next steps which include involvement from all NIU faculty and staff are: have patience with prioritization, provide input as processes are calibrated, support streamlining, continue to share ideas for new opportunities, and use changes to our advantage. Taking these steps will allow us to focus on why we are here.

After his presentation, McCord answered several questions. Meyer wanted to know if there were estimated timelines for the completion of the various projects. McCord answered that Tier I projects are estimated to take 1-2 years. He did not want to overpromise and then underdeliver. It was pointed out that Human Resource Services forms are electronic, while auditors’ comfort level and expectations are for paper copies. McCord admitted that this is an area where policy framework has not caught up. Royce noted that the presentation mentioned that 12 items were almost complete. Some of the documents now online are the change of grade form, key control, room scheduling, and teacher licensure. Nicholson wanted to know if technology accessibility is being considered. McCord is aware that not everyone has access to a workstation, and he is familiar with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) expectations. Katy Whitelaw has knowledge of ADA regulations, but she is not yet involved in technology accessibility. McCord was asked about electronic signature policy. Is NIU building its own system or using products like DocuSign? He answered that NIU is looking at systems we already own. Custom apps are difficult to maintain and integrate. In addition, changes to PeopleSoft come with different modules so the university can make better use of PeopleSoft. NIU will also work to optimize its use of PeopleAdmin.

VII. Public Comment

VIII. Announcements/Correspondence

A. Natasha Johnson: President’s Announcements

Johnson reported. She shared the names of OSC members who are part of the Remote Work Task Group. On Policy are Johnson and Jakubiak, Technology: Nicholson; Student Experience: Gingrich and Gutierrez-Vargas. There are no OSC members in the other three parts of the group: Models and Effective Practices, Employee Engagement, Support and Work-Life Balance, and Faculty Experience in and Beyond the Classroom.

B. Pulchratia Smith: Human Resource Services (HRS)

No report

C. Council Spotlight

This is a new feature for the OSC meetings. At each meeting, two OSC members whose nominator(s) feel(s) have gone above and beyond the call of duty will be featured in the Council Spotlight. At this meeting, May 6, 2021, OSC President Natasha Johnson and OSC/SPSC Administrative Aide Frances Mitchell were nominated for the Council Spotlight.

IX. Shared Governance Reports

A. Board of Trustees

No report

B. Faculty Senate

Met April 21, 2021. Approved members to serve on the 2021-2022 Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee. Professor Peter Chomentowski was elected as the next Faculty Senate President. There was a first reading of a proposed amendment to the Faculty Senate bylaws regarding its membership. An interim report that examines the five-year review of student evaluation of instruction was discussed.

C. Supportive Professional Staff Council (SPSC)

No report

D. Student Government Association (SGA)

No report

E. University Council (UC)

Johnson reported. There was discussion about a Cyberbullying Policy Workgroup. The university refinanced bonds and saved \$77 million in interest. Kendall Thu is retiring.

X. Committee Reports

A. Elections and Appointments

Monteiro reported. A search committee is forming to fill the NIU Chief of Police position. One member of the OSC was needed for the committee. Jakubiak, Schlagel, Teso-Warner and Ward self-nominated to be candidates. A Polly vote was conducted, and Teso-Warner was selected to the search committee. There are 13 candidates for eight positions in the OSC election. Ballots will go out next week with the deadline to vote May 21, 2021. Operating staff representatives who serve on campus committees sent year-end summaries of the committees. These have been e-mailed to all OSC members and everyone is asked to read these reports. The Elections and Appointments committee will meet again on May 18, 2021. K. Smith, who is a member of the Campus Parking Committee, announced that there will be no raise in parking permit fees this year. The committee is working on scenarios for the coming year(s).

B. Legislative Committee

Did not meet. Will continue to discuss the Operating Staff Personnel Advisor and the election procedures manual.

C. Public Relations/Activities

K. Smith reported. There will be two brown bag sessions offered on Teams. The first, "Oral History Recording of Loved Ones" takes place at noon on June 17. The second is "Basic Guitar Lesson," which will be presented by Laura Lagreid at 1:00 p.m. on July 15.

D. Workplace Guidance

Yates reported. Met April 28. The next day for COVID vaccinations at the Convocation Center is May 18. Anyone age 18 and above can make an appointment. The committee has been working with APAC to investigate the 20% reduction in the number of administrative professionals on campus. Rave Meyer had a lot of great input. They will be bringing the issue to Human Resource Services. Yates brought the graduate student issue to Dean Bond of the Graduate School. It was decided that the solution lies with the Department of IT. The employee whose review has not yet been done was advised to contact Sarah Klaper.

E. Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC)

Ranken reported. The virtual Administrative Professionals Day event was held April 21, 2021, and 80 employees attended via Teams. The recipient of the

Patricia S. Siebrasse Administrative Professionals Award for Excellence was Tita Kaus. There are 166 employees who have not picked out their service award gift. There are two dates when employees can pick up their gifts: June 23 and August 26.

F. Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

No report. Hulseberg shared that EAC meeting took place on April 14 on Zoom.

XI. Prior Business

A. Civil Service Emergency Fund

Nicholson reported. Met on April 9. They discussed eligibility and objective criteria. The fund now has a cost center and donations can be made by writing checks to the NIU Foundation with Civil Service Emergency Fund on the notes line and through payroll deduction. The committee is seeking donations from outside sources.

B. Chief Human Resource Services Officer Search

Hulseberg shared that Sunday, May 9, 2021, is now the deadline for applications for this search.

XII. New Business

Campus Child Care Cost

A concern was brought to OSC regarding the cost of campus childcare. Students get a discount, but not civil service employees. There is also a wait list. Another employee shared that campus childcare would cost 2/3 of her take-home pay. It was decided that this is a Workplace Guidance issue, and to speak to the Provost and the Ombudsperson.

XIII. Adjournment

Kozumplik moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Monteiro and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Bivens, Secretary
Operating Staff Council