Supportive Professional Staff Council Meeting
Thursday, October 11, 2018
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Approved November 8, 2018

Present: Adzovic, Anderson, Ballard, Bohanon, Borg, Bredberg, Builta, Doederlein, Franklin, Gipson, Hochstatter, Kazmierczak, King, Koenen, Meyer, Miller, Myles, Napientek, Olson, Pietrowski, Reid, Richter, Salmon, Sutcliffe, Watson, Xidis

Excused: Boughton, Dymond, Mitchell

Guest Speakers: John Butler, NIU Board of Trustees; John Hulseberg, NIU EAC Representative; Professor Matt Streb, NIU Chief of Staff & Liaison to the NIU Board of Trustees

Other Guests: Laura Alexander and Celeste Latham, HR; Holly Nicholson, OSC

Call to Order: President Doederlein called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.
Approval of Agenda as amended, motioned and seconded, all in favor, no objections, none opposed
   Motion: Jeff Salmon
   Second: Tom Kazmierczak

Approval of Minutes, September 11, 2018:
Approval of Minutes, motioned and seconded, all in favor, no objections, none opposed
   Motion: Jeff Salmon
   Second: Jeanna Ballard

Doederlein welcomed visitors and expressed the Council’s appreciation for their time and interest. She stated the primary topic of discussion is the State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS) migration of SPS positions to Civil Service and the October 1 deadline for conversion of flagged SPS positions. Doederlein cited three main concerns regarding this process as myths, misinformation and communication. She noted progress in the area of communication citing three informative emails to all SPS employees.

Doederlein dispelled the “myth” that bumping rights could be applied between institutions. This is absolutely not the case. Civil Service employees only have bumping rights within their employing institution/campus. Before opening the floor for discussion, Messrs. Streb, Hulseberg and Butler made some brief opening remarks.

Matt Streb stated two main problems: (1) the difficulty of applying a decades old statute to a twenty-first century workforce and (2) varying interpretations of the statute. Some systems take a proactive interpretation, searching for positions to re-classify while other systems take a reactive interpretation, re-classifying when a position becomes vacant.

John Hulseberg, NIU’s Operating Staff Council representative on the Employee Advisory Committee, which functions in an advisory capacity to the Merit Board, expressed his appreciation for inviting his participation in this meeting and said he will be taking the Council’s concerns back to Jeff Brownfield, Executive Director of the Merit Board.

John Butler, NIU’s Merit Board Representative and Member of NIU Board of Trustees, said after talking with the Chair of the Merit Board, Mr. Lyneir Cole, Butler sensed there may be a
disconnect between the Merit Board and the staff of the System Office not only about what they are doing but how they are communicating. From his interactions with the System Office he sensed a strong sense of civic duty to enforce the law, characterizing the work they are doing as protecting the Merit Board by doing what they are supposed to do.

In addition, Mr. Brownfield is taking the position that this process has been very clearly outlined; the university has had opportunities to express concerns and Mr. Cole has no appetite to re-think this. Although Butler said he did get a sense of Mr. Brown’s interest in revising the statute. Butler noted that some people believe the legislature would view this as not serving students. Butler stated we need to break up that understanding. He expressed his interest in learning what the Council’s concerns are and the challenges SPS employees are going to face. [Streb expressed pessimism regarding the possibility of getting the legislature to update the 1950’s governing statute.]

Doederlein opened the floor for discussion.

**Concern:** Would the possible change in Governor in the near future have an impact on this?  
**Response:** We need to make sure we say what our goals are.

**Concern:** Is there a preference for Illinois residents?  
**Response:** That rule changed a few years ago for certain categories, i.e. clerical. Most of the positions, which fall into SPS categories, are not in that group. They would fall into professional status which is unaffected by the rule.

**Concern:** I heard that academic advisors in the College of Business get more than academic advisors in the College of Education.  
**Response:** HR is working on parity; it is not OS vs SPS; there are different views of what an advisor is.

**Concern:** How do we prepare for everyone being civil service? What does shared governance look like in view of the changes going forward.  
**Response:** HR is not intending to eliminate SPS, just clarifying.

**Concern:** How do we as individuals stay whole? For example regarding seniority, I have been employed by NIU for over 20 years but only the last three years as a Director. How those years transfer over, in terms of seniority is of concern.  
**Response:** This is at the top of Butler’s list; however, it is not a top concern of the System Office. Their view is that this is for the good of the whole and we should not upset the rules over individual pain.

**Concern:** Academic perks get lost in Civil Service. We need flexibility such as re-ordering job requirements listed in job descriptions. For example, all civil service job requirements list a high school diploma as a minimum which might discourage appropriate candidates from applying.  
**Response:** We cannot change the way requirements are presented.

**Concern:** A Permanent SPS employee with a 12-month contract that is not renewed is given 12 months’ notice. Changing an SPS employee to Civil Service negates that and might make employees more vulnerable to dismissal.
Concern: People see moving from SPS to Civil Service as a demotion and this impacts morale on both sides. When I came to the University SPS employee status was faculty, no rank. That status gets lost.

Concern: There is a mismatch between specialty v job description. We need flexibility in the assessment process. Credential assessment is causing us to lose the people we are targeting. It is procedural, not statutory.

Mr. Butler pointed out that we must be careful of the language we use so as to not pit ourselves against each other.

Doederlein thanked visitors for their time and expressed appreciation to all. The meeting returned to regular order:

Announcements:
a.) STEM Café’s Frankenstein’s Legacy: Past, Present and Future, Tuesday, October 23rd at Fatty’s Pub & Grille 6:30-8:30 p.m.
b.) All Majors Internship and Job Fair – October 17, 10 AM to 3 PM – Convocation Center
c.) STEM Fest – October 25, 10 AM to 5 PM – Convocation Center
d.) Provost Search Committee—call for nominations being sent – expect electronic vote soon
e.) The Giving Project meets at Noon today and every other Thursday

Committee Reports:
Advocacy: Nothing new, discussed the same things we talked about here today.
Awards: Watson reported that the Call for Nominations going out in tomorrow’s email.
Communications & Technology: Richter reported that with Brian Walk’s transition to civil service, there is a need for more people on this committee. Felicia Bohanon signed up.
Constitution & Elections: Myles reported there are four university committees needing to be filled, an email will be coming out; there are twelve SPS open seats. We also need a treasurer. Bohanon self-nominated and is our new treasurer.
Events: Napientek reported the Stevens Building grand opening is tomorrow 5:00-7:00 p.m.
There may be a happy hour at the end of the month.
Professional Development: Needs volunteers. No other report.
Regional Community Relations: No report
SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund Committee: No Report.

Vice President’s Report: Campus Parking Committee reported they are reviewing changes made to lots last year, where spaces were converted from blue to yellow. Currently there are only two enforcement officers for all of campus. Parking will be taking over supervision of the Visitor Lot from the HSC.

Unfinished Business:
a.) Search Committee Updates – none
b.) SUCSS Procedure Update – covered at today’s general meeting
c.) 125th Birthday Committee Update: Name changed to 125th Anniversary Committee. Sub-Committees have been formed.
d.) Update to Constitution – Second Reading by Bredberg: Expansion of the committee will have a positive impact in view of electronic application process and the need for a member from the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office to assist in accessing the budget and other necessary information. Myles moved to approve, seconded by Buitla. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions; motion passed.
New Business: None

University Committee Reports:
Board of Trustees – 12/6/2018
Board of Trustees Committees – 11/15/18
University Council – 11/7/2018
Operating Staff Council – 11/1/2018
Faculty Senate – 10/31/2018

Doederlein asked for a motion to adjourn, Adzovic so moved seconded by Myles. Meeting Adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Representatives: Please contact your alternate and the SPS Council Secretary, Linda Watson, if you are unable to attend the meeting. Alternates: You are invited to attend all meetings.