

TO: Staff Senate  
FROM: Traci Vennie  
DATE: September 21, 2023  
SUBJECT: September 20, 2023, Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

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**In Attendance:** Shawn Beistline, Amy Black, Bridget Conlogue, Grismeiris De Jesus, Rebecca Dzikowski, Kym Fetsko, Autumn Forgione, Melisa Gallo, Lucy Grissinger, Meg Hambrose, Rose Ann Jubinski, Sybil Keris, Jonathan Kirby, Bernard Krzan, Kristi Klien, Denise Kuzma, Father Marina, Sandina Meo, Mark Murphy, Meghan Nowakowski, Peter Sakowski, Patricia Savits, Daniela Teneva, Patricia Tetreault, and Traci Vennie.

**Not In Attendance:** Brenda Amato, Geri Barber, Brenda Lee Clarke, Peggy Doolittle, Melissa Eckenrode, Lori Flynn, Andrea Malia, Tammy Manka, and Janet Schieber.

**Welcome:** Mr. Mark Murphy, President, called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM. Meg Hambrose offered the opening prayer. Geri Barber will offer the opening prayer at the next meeting. Mr. Murphy read the Land Acknowledgement Statement. Attendance was checked, a quorum was met.

**Review of Previous Month's Minutes:** The minutes from the August meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved.

**Review of Agenda:** A motion was made to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded, and the agenda was approved.

**Guests:** Father Marina

Father Marina commended and applauded our work, and offered thanks for all we do for the University.

**Updates:**

- New first year class brings us 1038 new students for the start of the Fall 2023 term. The class dons an average SAT score of 1200, and an average high school GPA of 3.60. With 31% being First Generation students, and 229 students of color, this number is down due to financial packages. We could not be as generous this year as we have been in the past and with this, we saw less students of color enroll. Father went on to explain that the Open-Door Scholarship is not meant solely for students of color. He went on to discuss the discount rate decrease and the importance of keeping the rate at this level or to continue to see it go down. At a rate of 64.5 last year and 62.9 this year, that indicates that on average we collect 37 cents on the dollar of our tuition dollars. We have students from 15 different states and saw an increase in students from NEPA. Historically, our area has not been dependable to bring in students to the University as our population is not growing in this area. We are beginning to look to the South where there is significant growth. Father reiterated his thanks for the part we play in getting them here and stressed the importance of keeping the students here. He noted that seeing and hearing staff interact with families at move in plays a role in that and again, offered thanks for our help at move in.
- This year there are plans to work to expand definition of enrollment management. There will be a focus on retention and transfers, as well as graduate population.
- Saturday night was the Gala to kick off the public phase of capital campaign. The campaign began in 2017 and will be completed in May 2025. The goal is \$135 million for scholarships and infrastructure. To date, we have gathered \$112

million of the \$135 million, however much of the money is not in yet as it comes from benefactors as they go to the lord. We have great momentum toward the goal at this stage.

- Plans to break ground in Spring on the new building. We see they have begun to scrape off the space near Mulberry Street. This area is being avoided as a main entrance due to the traffic on Mulberry. Plans are to use that area for green space with lighting and benches. The building will continue down the block and end near the end of Brennan. The goal is to create additional parking in the vicinity as well. The building is dedicated to workforce development as that is what grant was for. There are plans for a prayer garden on third floor.
- Draft policy for remote work will go before Cabinet in the October meeting. Father Marina not yet seen the draft. Once the Cabinet deliberates, it will go to Father for review, and they will get back to us.
  - A salary increase is coming! No numbers yet, the plan is to as generous and fair as possible. Hoping it is out within the next two weeks.
  - Father noted there is a goal to find additional parking on campus. They are looking at informal space across from Elm Park, where the funeral home was, as well as looking at other locations. There are approximately 16 locations and they have hired a consultant to review the footprint. The feeling is there is great potential, and he states we have enough parking in general however, some is so far away.

#### **Questions for Father:**

- **Will any be reserved for visitors only?** Garage only has approximately 8 visitor spots available, and this is not enough for forums held in the library.
- **Will new building have additional event space that will be reservable?** Yes, main foyer will be an open atrium and should be able to be used.
- **Is there an update on Brown Hall?** Last week, at the BOT meeting there was discussion about seeking someone to rent it. The feeling is we do not need it as university space but would make a great law office or dental office.

#### **Liaison Report:** Patricia Tetreault

- Cabinet prepared for BOT meeting.
- Financial statements from last fiscal year are final and submitted to board. Beginning the review of this years to date as this is a continual cycle.
- Working on an analysis for staff compensation.
- October Cabinet will review the Remote Workplace Practice Policy submitted in May.
- The annual Health plan renewal is slated for later in October to the BOT.
- Cap trust is the new service we have for the retirement plan. They would like to email staff and faculty, if you do not want them to do so, you can unsubscribe. Cap Trust will be on campus this Fall with a date yet TBD.
- Covid protocol was covered in the Health and Safety update sent out at the start of the term. We continue to follow CDC guidance. There is no longer a need to contact HR to report cases, however it is important to contact your department head.
- New topic for exempt staff only – presently no supervisor signs off on leave time taken. It has been determined that best practice is to implement that step in the system. To alleviate manual adjustment to the system by Payroll and HR, implementation of supervisor approval is currently being tested. Staff in the meeting that are participating in the test phase had positive reviews. They felt it made sense and was easy. Questions: What happens if a supervisor does not approve the leave in a timely manner? The intention is not to hold up payroll, therefore we are suggesting every manager has a proxy to handle it when supervisor is away. The idea is to have documentation in place, not to hold up payroll. When will this be rolled out? December is a loose goal.

#### **President's Report:**

- Committee sign-up sheets: The committees were ratified with their leadership. Those leaders can add people as interest develops. Changes should be sent to the Communications Committee so the website can be updated.
- Mark will seek Michelle, Ed, and Jose as future guest speakers at our meetings.
- Trustee Report:
  - Spoke about the diversity of the incoming class.
  - Discussed the new building, and a presentation by the architectural firm was given.
  - Discussion about a certification of LEED, Leadership in Engineering and Environmental Design for the building. A level of Silver is the goal. Note this was later updated to Gold as the goal.
  - Michelle is working on an Environmental Scans which encompasses an evaluation of the different programs of study on campus. This is a one-year license with Grey and Associates to determine, using analytics, what new programs we could implement.
  - Bobby Davis announced the gala and the campaign.
  - Shannon Zottola reported the applications are up for this time of Fall term. Indicators mentioned such as campus visits have all increased.
  - Lauren Rivera gave the profile of the class.
  - Trustee subcommittee: Education Committee and the Enrollment Management Committee require representation from the Staff Senate. Last year Lucy Grissinger was the representative for the Education Committee and Rose Ann Jubinski was the representative for the Enrollment Management Committee.
    - The Subcommittee meetings are typically held the day before the Trustee meetings.
    - Last year we sent an email to all Senators and asked for a paragraph as to why the nominee is interested in taking this role.
    - Lucy offered insight into the experience of serving and stated, it was fascinating, no hard, very interesting.
    - Questions can be asked of the representative but historically have not been.
    - The goal is to have new representatives in place by next month's meeting.
- University Governance Counsel (UGC):
  - Kristi reported that the meeting was led by Michelle Maldonato, Provost. Kate Yerkes assists.
  - Representation from each of the following senates attend, Faculty, Staff, and Student.
  - Much of what Father, Patty and Mark covered was discussed. In addition, an Emergency Evacuation Procedure has been approved and put in place through the Office of Equity and Diversity.
  - Michelle went over the charge.
  - Kate identified that there are Title 9 updates on the horizon, we expect to see them in the late Fall/early Spring.
  - Faculty Senate is working on the revision of the General Education Curriculum as well as striving to improve overall communication.
  - Student Senate reported over 400 students attended Grocery Bingo, and they are beginning to establish the teams to make up their committees.
  - Kristi read the Staff Senate report in Mark's absence and offered that we have submitted the Remote Workplace Practice Policy, we continue the Meg Cullen-Brown Magis Award monthly, advised Father Marina will speak at our upcoming meeting, illustrated that we held an orientation for new Senators, detailed the new officers for the 23/24 year, and discussed our plan to review the make up our Constituencies as the number of staff has decreased over the years.
  - An Interim Registrar has been hired and will be onboarded Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. A search will be launched in January.
  - There will be Student Satisfaction Surveys distributed as well as IPS.

- Michelle mentions two academic affair townhalls per semester. She intends to include students in one of them. The first one is scheduled for Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Michelle asked for Senates to present how we operate and how we run so that we can better connect all Senates together.
- Mark offered thanks to Kristi for running the August meeting.
- Mark offered thanks to Kym for running the Meg Cullen-Brown awards.

#### **Previous Business:**

- Mark will communicate to Joe Boyd the acceptance of the decreased monthly award to the Megan Cullen-Brown Awardees.

#### **Standing Committee Reports:**

- **Communications Committee:** Co-Chairs: Denise Kuzma and Melisa Gallo
  - The committee has met and scheduled a Symposium on October 26<sup>th</sup> in the Pearn Auditorium from 11:30-1pm with a topic yet to be determined.
  - Planning a Newsletter in December.
- **Election & Membership:** Tri-chairs: Shawn Beistline, Rose Ann Jubinski & Kristi Klien
  - The committee has not yet met.
  - Rose Ann will coordinate with others for the invite to the board committee volunteers.
  - Reminder to look at the numbers per constituency and reevaluate the needs.
- **Finance:** Chair: Traci Vennie
  - Gained access to monthly reports.
  - No expenditures at this point.
- **Social Events & Community Building:** Co-chairs: Melissa Eckenrode and Lucy Grissinger
  - Lucy noted they are working on December 13<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>, however at this time the ballroom is already reserved for the President's Reception and there is a hope that one of the two dates will open up once a determination is made when the Presidents event will be.
- **Staff Development:** Co-chairs: Geri Barber & Meg Hambrose
  - Nothing new to report. Working out details for interests previously noted.
  - Patti confirmed PNC will do credit or data breach presentation and that we can with Beth to set it up.
- **Staff Recognition and Excellence:** Chair: Kym Fetsko
  - Meeting slated for October 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - 44 nominators received for October to date.
  - The committee has asked Mark to confirm the decreased award has been confirmed with Joe.
- **Ad Hoc:**
  - **Assessment:** Chair: Geri Barber
  - Committee has not yet met.

- **Remote Policy**: Co-Chairs: Mark Murphy and Traci Vennie
  - Father Marina and Patti have confirmed that the Policy will be reviewed at the October Cabinet meeting.

**Items from the Floor:**

- The Employee resource document still on website and has many broken links and it was agreed that it should be taken down until we determine what we plan to do with it.

**Motion to Adjourn:**

- A motion was made to adjourn at 3:09 PM. The motion was seconded and approved.