

Southwestern Staff Council Minutes October 8, 2014

Present: Claudio Brigueda, Jamie Collins, Joe Dube, Kirk Fast, Debbie Flaming, Janet Grabeal, Mallory Hankins, Tommy McDaniel, Kathy Megli, Glenda Printz, Nancy Sanders, Jessica Smith, Justin Weathers **Not present: Michael Kluver, Tommy McDaniel**

1. Call to Order – Kathy Megli – 9:30 am
2. Approve September's minutes – *Previously Emailed*
 - The September 10, 2014 minutes were presented via email prior to the meeting.
 - Janet Grabeal motioned to approve the minutes with no changes, seconded by Justin Weathers. Approved by majority vote.
3. Question and Answer Session – Tom Fagan
 - **What is the status of the following proposals/requests?**
 - A. Annual Cost of Living Adjustment Proposal**
 - President Beutler wants to be supportive of this, but cannot guarantee this, since he does not know the future revenue for the University. The President is suggesting a 2% raise for January, and another raise to take effect in July.
 - B. Tuition Waiver Proposal**
 - The tuition waiver proposal was denied by the Executive Council.
 - C. SSC Chair to be part of the Executive Council and the Benefits Committee.**
 - President Beutler has denied the Executive Council seat request.
 - The Benefits Committee seat was approved .
2. **Faculty salary is based on CUPA numbers and the plan is to bring them up to 90 percent of CUPA. What is staff salary based on and what is the plan to adjust staff salaries and a time frame to implement the plan?**
 - CUPA is not limited to faculty. It covers 2/3 of the workforce. David Misak is working on a survey to cover the rest of the workforce. The survey will compare 123 companies in Custer County that employ 50 or more employees. The survey will look at pay level, benefit level, and amount of vacation.
 - Mallory Hankins inquired why the survey was not statewide.
 - Most of the positions that the survey will compare are recruited on a more local level, usually within a 50-mile radius. The University knows that one single survey will not provide the answers that we need. It may take more than one survey to tell us what is fair and affordable.
 - Janet Grabeal asked if the main goal now is faculty salaries.

- Right now the main goal is to get faculty to 80% of the standard. The goal of strategic planning is to ultimately get faculty to 90%, so at the next budget cycle the University will try to bring it up to 82.5%. Although they do not know if they can afford it at this moment. The question is should someone only making 80% be given more than someone already at 90%, to help close the gap.
- Janet Grabeal inquired if evaluating positions to see the level of responsibilities would help.
- Tom Fagan stated that at this point everyone is so far behind that they want to raise everyone before they look into merit.
- Janet Grabeal stated that there are several people on campus that are not currently making a livable wage.
- Tom Fagan agreed but stated that the University's budget is \$58 million and we spend \$58 million.
- Kathy Megli stated that at one time there was talk of taking staff off of retirement. Is this still something that is being considered?
- Tom Fagan said that OTRS is not mandatory for staff, only for faculty, administrators and supervisors. However, past presidents made a commitment to cover ALL employees. Since not all employees benefit from the same retirement plan they are talking about offering a plan B, or making signing up for retirement voluntary for new staff employees, however, he feels that it should remain mandatory.
- He stated that the SSC could explore this further.

3. What is the university plan for budgeting the salary increases for faculty/staff?

- The plan is to give raises in January and July of 2015.
- They cannot predict what will happen the following year at this time.

4. Several of the issues were talked about in Strategic Goal 4 – can you give us an update on what is being addressed in the strategic plan?

- Janet Grabeal said that the only issue we hadn't already talked about was evaluations. When people retire, that job could be cut, and others' salaries could be raised. Technology has changed jobs, but no one has evaluated the jobs to see if they are still necessary or if they could be combined with other jobs.
- Tom Fagan said that it would be great if, for example, we could cut Administrative Assistants by 25% and give all of them a 20% raise.
- Janet Grabeal asked if Performance-based Evaluations would be brought back.
- Tom Fagan said that the issue with Merit Evaluations is that they are unreliable. Supervisors would give everyone perfect scores and then a

month later the supervisor would say that a certain employee was not doing their job, even though they had just gotten a perfect score.

- Janet Grabeal stated that at a past job they had evaluations by other co-workers not just supervisors.
- Justin Weathers said that having evaluations could improve productivity.
- Tom Fagan stated that was not the case when we had evaluations.

5. Is there a plan to replace the safety officer on campus? If not how is campus safety being addressed?

- Everyone should be in charge of safety. Cindi Albrightson knows of regulations and can help to make sure that we are in compliance. The University has also put together a Risk Management Task Force, which consists of representatives from all areas across campus.
- Cindi Albrightson has made some training available on the SWOSU website.
- Mallory Hankins asked if building specific training would be offered.
- Tom Fagan stated that we could use the local career tech as a training source. The university will tell them what training we need and they will make a program available.
- Debbie Flaming asked if there would be any training on the defibrillators that are going into all of the buildings.
- Tom Fagan stated that getting training for defibrillators was just discussed at the Risk Management Task Force meeting, and training will be available in the near future through the Career Tech.
- Justin Weathers inquired how the University will keep up on training with regulations constantly changing.
- Tom Fagan stated that we will have to rely on the Risk management Task Force and the Career Tech at this time. We will try this method for a few years and see if it works. If it doesn't, we will find another method that works for our University. Safety is everyone's responsibility.
- Kathy Megli asked who we report safety concerns to.
- Tom Fagan stated that we should report them to himself, Cindi Albrightson, or David Misak.
- Jessica Smith asked how to should request training.
- Tom Fagan stated that we should use the SSC to request training for staff employees.

6. Staff concerns on new positions created and filled without posting and having an opportunity to apply for those positions.

- Those positions are filled by the nominate process. These are not overnight decisions. Transferring or nominating employees in this manner will be limited in number, and will only be done if it benefits employees.

7. SSC feels that having an informational meeting at least 1-2 times a year and share budget information, projects on campus and how they are funded etc. so faculty/staff have a better understanding of how things work. Share your thoughts on this idea.

- Over the last several years the Administration has been trying very hard to explain everything that is going on to the Administrative Council. The members of Administrative Council are supposed to pass on all information to their employees. This doesn't seem to be working. They are willing to do open meetings quarterly to provide information and answer questions, or a newsletter, or whatever the SSC feels would be a good method to convey information to staff members.

8. Clarification of SSC budgets – operating and foundation? Why PLC expense is taken from the SSC budget when it is a student leadership class and is there other things taken from the operating account?

- The SSC account was comingled with Leadership Weatherford. Brenda Burgess is separating Leadership Weatherford into it's own account.

9. What are SSC Fund Raising options on campus (Pioneer Cellular Event Center, Ball games etc.)?

- The SSC should figure out what we want to do and submit a proposal to Tom Fagan and President Beutler and they will make the final decision as to what we can do, and where we can do it.

10. Any other questions?

- Justin Weathers asked what number the University looks at to base COLA on.
- Tom Fagan stated that they look at Urban numbers since 2008. The last three years the cost of living has increased 1.7%, 1.5% and 1.7%, respectively, and the University has given cost of living raises for the last three years. Next year they will give another 2% raise.
- Justin Weathers asked what the plan is to keep insurance deductibles down.
- Tom Fagan stated that we have been working with 11 other Universities, which use a group that gathers all of the information and that has worked for the past few years.

4. Staff Recognition Reception Update

- The reception will be on October 31 at 10:00am. If anyone can help with set-up please arrive at 8:30am.

5. Meeting Adjournment – 10:50 am

- Mallory Hankins motioned to adjourn, seconded by Kirk Fast. Approved by majority vote.

Next SSC meeting – November 12, 2014.