February 14, 2018 1:00pm-2:00pm GSU335 | Meeting called to order by Katie Cox, Chair

In Attendance

Executive Board: Katie Cox, Chair; Carla J. Fuller, Ben Ide, Ellen Levasseur, Rachel Yacouby, Linda Zigmont

Staff Members: Kelly Anderson, Randi Ashton-Pritting, Lisa Belanger-Buoniconti, Donna Clarke, Barbara Dessureau, Valerie Gilleran, Christine Lapierre, Lindsay McKeegan, Cindy Oppenheimer, Sean Parke, Kate Sheely, Bonnie Taylor, Lynn Thibodeau

I. Introductions

Katie Cox opened the meeting at 1:03pm. She introduced staff member Carla J. Fuller, Office Coordinator for Nursing Programs, who will fill the Recording Secretary position vacated by Catherine Rose. She thanked Catherine for her work as Recording Secretary.

II. Discussion and Approval of Minutes from the 12/13/17 Meeting

The 12/13/17 minutes were approved unanimously without changes.

III. University Committee Reports

a. Budget Advisory Team – Randi Ashton-Pritting/Valerie Gilleran
   The University continues to require an 8-week waiting period before staff vacancies can be filled. Medical claims were unexpectedly high at the end of 2017. The University expects costs to improve with the increase of employees moving to the deductible-based plans and the discontinuation of benefits for spouses of employees making over $40,000/year.

b. Wellness Committee – Lindsay McKeegan/Barbara Dessureau
   No report at this time.

c. Benefits Taskforce – Cindy Oppenheimer/(Lynn Galvin—not present)
   734 employees are now covered under the University of Hartford medical plan. A slight drop from the previous year. 75% of those covered are now under one of the deductible plans. The Administration received feedback and concerns across the campus regarding the change to the plan as well as the discontinuation of spousal coverage (104 spouses were taken off the medical plan).* The coming year will bring dental plan changes and the yearly review and “out to bid” of medical carriers. The process begins in April. *(Information provided by HRD following the meeting: 107 spouses were taken off the medical plan which equals a 29% drop in covered spouses.)

Other items:

- The bereavement policy was discussed.
- BTF would like a formal proposal from the Staff Association with the reasons and benefits for the Vacation Rollover request.
- Proposed changes to the Parental Leave policy have been sent by HRD to the counsel’s office. Feedback is forthcoming.
d. Presidential Commission for the Status of Women – (Meagan Fazio-not present)

Katie Cox reported that because of time constraints Meagan Fazio asked to relinquish her seat to another staff member who is on the Commission. Donna Clarke volunteered to take the position and gave the report:

The campus Climate Subcommittee of the PCSW submitted to the Commission their final summary and recommendations from the staff and faculty focus groups. They asked all members to review the summary and come back with recommendations at the next meeting.

IV. Staff Association Reports

a. Web Advisory Committee - Barbara Dessureau
Marketing and Communication staff currently working under various Colleges and Departments across the University will now be centralized under The Office of Marketing and Communication (OMC). There will be a meeting of the Web Advisory Committee in February, the first since November ’17. More information will be available following that meeting.

b. Faculty Senate – Ben Ide
President Woodward gave a synopsis of potential new initiatives. Among them are: new Scholarship Days where UH applicants will vie for 10 full tuition scholarships and every student who attends will be given a $1,000 discount on their bill; encouraging more faculty engagement with students; increasing cross-discipline collaboration for students; realigning faculty and staff roles in a way that will help increase student success; following through to make sure students succeed by offering free tuition for any student who has not graduated within 5 years of matriculation. While the University’s income is down, we are ahead of projected fundraising. The President will be asking the Board of Regents for money to immediately improve classroom furniture and collaborative spaces. He wants no more than a 10 year plan to replace dorms.

Provost Fred Sweitzer reported that negotiations with part-time faculty unions are in progress and should conclude this semester. A number of diversity initiatives are being developed including a new diversity committee, faculty recruitment and retention, and having more classes based on diversity and inclusiveness within the curriculum.

Molly Polk, VP of Marketing and Communication reported that currently they are completing the restructure of OMC to include all staff on campus who work on marketing and communication. While staff will continue to work in their current geographic locations they will now report to OMC. The Branding update is continuing and a new website is being developed. Currently there are 20,000 webpages and there should only be about 3,000. OMC will now work more closely with efforts to increase enrollment. The marketing plans for individual Schools and Colleges will eventually be aligned with the plan created for Admissions by OMC. Other initiatives:

- Improve campus signage
- Improve unsightliness of dumpsters, etc.
- Study UNotes as a possible intranet/destination for staff
- Complete re-make/renameing of the Observer Alumni magazine
- Improve media relations planning to shorten response times for official comments or expert faculty requests
- Elevate University brand through faculty social media and blogging
- Create a comprehensive advertising campaign
The Faculty Diversity Committee would like to see an increase in the diversity of faculty, staff and administration to reflect the University’s diverse student population. This should be an amendment to the Strategic Plan. They are calling for a new Center for Diversity, with a full-time Director. They will formalize their recommendations in a letter to President Woodward.

c. Treasurer’s Report – Rachel Yacouby
There are no changes to report.

d. Membership Director Report – Ellen Levasseur
There are 119 members in the Staff Association.

e. Fundraising Committee – Valerie Gilleran
This committee is on a hiatus.

V. Old Business

a. Continued discussion from the January 10, 2018 open meeting
Ben Ide reported that the discussion of the informal meeting included:
- Suggestions that the structure of the proposed new Staff Council be centered on representing Staff by job types versus by University Colleges and major Departments. (i.e. Campus Office Coordinators or Administrative Assistants (Office Support Staff) vs. all staff in a particular College or area/bloc).¹
- A request that the Staff Assn. Executive Board (i.e. EBoard) discuss with Pres. Woodward the need for the College Deans to include their college staff more in meetings and on certain committees. This especially relates to academic office staff. (Office Coordinators or Administrative Assistants.)
- The Office Coordinator positions and their unique issues are being reviewed by the EBoard.

VI. New Business

Katie Cox reported that the EBoard is looking at ways to strengthen the presence and influence of the Staff Association. President Woodward wants the SA to represent all non-union staff on campus and to disband “opting-in”. Therefore, the EBoard is now looking to move towards a Staff Council structure, where all non-union staff, under the Assistant Vice President level, are represented.

¹The current proposal is for University staff to be divided into “voting blocs” according to specifically defined areas across the University (i.e. the seven Colleges, Libraries, Administrative offices, Facilities, Institutional Advancement, etc.) Each bloc would elect a voting representative to the Staff Council. In addition, four or five At-Large Members would be elected by all members of the Staff Council. A smaller Executive Board may also be considered. The Staff Council would meet monthly.

Changing staff representation to a Staff Council vs. the current Staff Association, would offer University staff a centralized presence on campus and the ability to speak with greater voice since it would directly represent non-union staff across the entire University. Also being considered are sub-committees on which non-Council staff can serve, opening opportunities for general staff to be involved in a variety of ways. The current EBoard hopes to have a Staff Council up and running by the Fall of 2018. Katie would also like a staff newsletter to be developed.

Katie Cox gave staff attending the meeting the charge to bring a person with them to the next meeting who does not normally come to SA meetings and to ponder how to move forward with developing a Staff Council.
3/14/18
4/11/18 Annual Meeting
5/9/18
6/13/18

Respectfully Submitted by: Carla J. Fuller; Recording Secretary