May 9, 2018 1:00pm-2:00pm GSU335 | Meeting called to order by Katie Cox, Chair

In Attendance

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

Staff Members: Kelly Anderson, Tina Berrien, Donna Clarke, Laurie Fasciano, Lynn Galvin, Valerie Gilleran, Laura Heemskerk, Christine Lapierre, Pam Masi, Meaghan Murphy, Cindy Oppenheimer, Sean Parke, Allison Poulin, Bonny Taylor, Lisa Wollenberg

I. Introductions

Katie Cox welcomed the staff and thanked them for coming.

II. Discussion and Approval of Minutes from the April 11, 2018 Meeting

The Membership approved the April 11, 2018 minutes without changes. Motion to approve by Ben Ide and seconded by Cindy Oppenheimer. Motion passed.

III. University Committee Reports

a. Budget Advisory Team – Randi Ashton-Pritting, Valerie Gilleran reported:
   “The May 10th Budgetary Advisory Team meeting was cancelled. The April 12 was also cancelled. The staff and faculty have been invited to attend a FY2019 budget open forum at 9am on May 10 in the 1877 Club (May 8 UNotes).” END OF REPORT

b. Wellness Committee – Lindsey McKeegan, Barbara Dessureau
   The Committee is currently on hiatus.

c. Benefits Taskforce – Cindy Oppenheimer, Lynn Galvin reported:
   “No meeting has been held since the last Staff Assoc. meeting. Therefore, no report.”
   Staff then engaged in a discussion regarding the new “Parental Leave” policy recently announced and expressed positive reactions to the new policy.

d. Presidential Commission for the Status of Women – Donna Clarke reported:
   “No meeting has been held since the last Staff Assoc. meeting. No Report at this time, but the Commission will be meeting on May 23.”

e. Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Task Force – Christine Lapierre reported:
   “The next meeting of the Task Force is on May 24, therefore nothing new to report.”
   Thereafter followed a brief discussion when Christine said that she and others, in the Task Force meeting, asked whether the solutions they arrive at will actually be implemented. They also had questions about whether some of the procedures and processes are already in place for hiring diverse candidates.

IV. Staff Association Reports

a. Web Advisory Committee – Barbara Dessureau reported:
   “Neither of the web committees has met this past month, so no report for the Staff Association.”
b. Faculty Senate – Ben Ide reported:
“President Woodward spoke about the budget adjustments to FY19. It represents a 4.7% cut (the target was 5%) but it doesn’t include the elimination of any occupied positions. Savings come from reductions in the number of consultants, holding open faculty and staff positions, eliminating overtime, and cutting miscellaneous expenses like travel, fleet vehicles, computers/software, and donations. He also talked about lowering the thermostats in winter, raising them in summer, and possibly sending staff home on hot days so we don’t have to pay for air conditioning. Meanwhile, enrollment is behind by about 100 students (or $2.2 million), there are 20% less high school graduates in Connecticut, and Hillyer retention is only at 53%.

“President Woodward’s bold ideas were well received by the Board of Regents. He’s going to start asking money to make renovations, starting with the dorms and classrooms.

“The scholarship competition was a big success. 30% of the as-yet-unregistered student applicants who showed up to compete for a full scholarship decided to enroll. Next year the President would like to offer the top 1% of applicants a full ride and the next 10% half off.

“Provost Fred Sweitzer talked about being slightly less dependent on traditional undergraduate students. We should continue to pursue non-traditional student enrollments, graduate students, and continuing-education programs, but keep in mind that most of our income is still from traditional four-year undergraduates (for example, an undergraduate student brings in three times the income of a graduate student).

“Vice President of Finance and Administration Arosha Jayawickrema talked more about the challenges we are facing and how we can’t keep doing what we have been and expect the same level of income in future years. He confirmed that a salary merit increase is in the budget for next year and echoed much of what President Woodward said about plans for sprucing up the campus within the next three years.

“The Faculty Senate held their executive committee elections, and there was one candidate running for each position. Anne Pidano will continue as the Chair, Jonathan Daigle is the new Vice Chair, and Michael Winiger is the Secretary.” END OF REPORT

c. Treasurer’s Report – Rachel Yacouby reported:
“There have been no changes to total of the Staff Association account: $765.53.”

d. Membership Director Report – Ellen Levasseur report:
“The membership continues to be 120.”

e. Fundraising Committee – Valerie Gilleran
The Committee is currently on hiatus.

V. Old Business

Katie Cox reported that she and President Woodward have been meeting. They both want to move to a Staff organization where all staff are automatically part of it. In other words, Staff would no longer have to “opt in”. The goal is to have a new structure that would better represent non-union Staff from all areas of the campus and to represent Staff with one voice. During this time of change, Katie expressed that it is important for Staff to be part of making the change. She has reviewed the framework from President Woodward’s previous college, Carthage College, where they had a Staff Council structure. Ben Ide is reviewing the current Staff Association Constitution and By-laws to see what would need to be changed. The hope is that a change to a Staff Council will increase Staff participation.
VI. New Business

Katie Cox reviewed the basic structure of staff representation on a Staff Council. Using the white board she listed voting blocs that would have voting representatives who would sit on the Staff Council. Each bloc would hold meetings and the representative would bring that bloc’s ideas/concerns to the Council. However, everyone on Staff would be allowed to attend Council meetings and voice their opinion – just as they do now at Staff Association meetings. The only difference is that only the reps would be “voting” members for items traditionally voted on: 1) approving minutes, 2) voting on SA officers, 3) voting for representatives to sit on University committees and, 4) changes to the SA Constitution and By-Laws. The following are the areas across the campus which are being considered as voting blocs with a voting representative on the Staff Council: all 8 colleges would be represented individually, Bates House, Student Affairs, Administration, FASB, Public Safety, Asylum Avenue campus, Athletics, Facilities, Gengras, the Library, Institutional Advancement and the Office of Marketing and Communication (20 blocs). In addition, there would be 5 At-Large members on the Staff Council – totaling 25 voting members who would represent all areas of the University. Still under consideration is that there would still be a “higher level” Executive Board with elected representatives as there is currently. Also being considered would be additional committees that would meet to discuss and bring to the council more specific areas of concern or work on campus activities. These might include a Benefits Committee, Hospitality Committee, Fundraising Committee, or an Office Support Staff Committee. Katie Cox and the EBoard would like to impress on the membership that their input during this time of change is very important and to stay informed and involved by coming to the meetings.

FUTURE MEETING: 1-2pm GSU 335

6/13/18 - Final Meeting of 2017-2018
7/11/18 - First Meeting of 2018-2019

Respectfully Submitted by: Carla J. Fuller; Recording Secretary