Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, May 09, 2012   9:00 AM, Billingsly Room 310


Member(s) Absent / Excused: Hiedi Carlin

Determination of Quorum: Fourteen of Sixteen active members present when meeting began; quorum established.

Call to Order: Killingsworth called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Approval of Minutes: Tessman made a motion to approve the minutes; Davies seconded the motion. Motion carried and the minutes from April 11, 2012 were approved as written.

Administrative Comments: Killingsworth welcomed everyone including the gallery.

Committee Reports:
Killingsworth called for committee reports:

- Communications Committee – Tessman shared the committee charge with the group and it was informally approved. In addition the proposal for handling proposals was brought before the Senate. It was agreed this proposal does not need approval from President’s Council; it appears under Old Business on the agenda. Wengert suggested a handbook for procedures covering things that are not necessarily bylaws. The last item concerned the Staff Senate survey and the process of summarizing the open-ended questions. The document done from two viewpoints: what we are doing well and what needs to be improved, is available on the Staff Senate Communications SharePoint site.

- Elections Committee – Doak announced the results of the election: Classified: Tonya Nickle and Nancy Rainey, Professional: Natalie Bruce and Aaron Lewis, and At Large: Alicia Hughes. In the Physical Plant category, at the time the ballot was compiled most nominees had either turned down the nomination or had not responded, as a result there were no Physical Plant employees on the ballot. Since that time one or two Physical Plant employees have expressed interest in serving. Doak suggested they come to the July meeting, express their interest in serving and the Senate vote on filling the vacant position. The bylaws do not address an unfilled position at election. Wengert asked if the Election Committee would want to make a recommendation to change the bylaws to address this situation before the July meeting. Killingsworth suggested the Legislative Oversight Committee could look at this situation. Killingsworth will speak to the interested parties and the Executive Committee can make a decision based on the bylaws Article V Elections, Section 6 Vacancies which states if vacancies occur before the last year of a term another representative shall be appointed by the Staff Senate executive council....
• Ethics Committee – This ad hoc committee will disband once the Code of Conduct Proposal is addressed.

• Executive Committee – Did not meet. Killingsworth received a letter from Sherry Buchanan (Chair of the Board of Governors) thanking the Senate for its hard work and dedication to the staff.

• Staff Welfare Committee – Bruce spoke in Carlin’s absence. The recreation center proposal has been tabled at this point. Everyone on the committee will research employee benefits at two area institutions. Epperson noted for clarification that there are institutions that offer free or discounted memberships to their fitness facilities; however their rec. centers/fitness centers were built by state and/or donated funds. Our rec. center was built with student funds. Talley asked if the flex-time proposal was discussed; Bruce responded this part of the committee research.

• Campus Committees:
  Administrative Council – Did not meet.

  Appreciation Committee – Epperson mentioned the Lion decals; the leftovers were passed out at the all-campus picnic. They are continuing to work on a campus picnic to be held in August. They are always looking for suggestions; they can be made on SharePoint. A recent suggestion was to give employees Thursday, July 5 off with pay instead of having to come back after having Wednesday July 4 off.

  Budget Advisory Council – In Carlin’s absence Edwards reported details of the budget were reviewed at the meeting. At the previous meeting a deficit of approximately $12,000 was reported – after tweaking, the budget is now in the black by $7,605. There are a lot changes coming as far as funding and restructuring; Dr. Speck advised they hope to have things worked out by the end of next spring.

  Faculty Senate – Killingsworth was told they did not meet, a senator reported they met last night (May 7).

  Shared Governance – Talley reported they still haven’t met.

  Strategic Planning – Arwood reported committee members were asked to pool the top ten tactics; currently there are eight tactics that have eight votes or more. Most of those tactics fall under objective 1.1; provide undergraduate programs to meet the needs of our stakeholders. The primary focus is to identify the stakeholders, identify strengths and deficiencies. The deans and department heads will be contacted to gather information. There was discussion that reiterated the fact that we are an undergraduate institution and that should be our primary focus.

Old Business:

1. Location of future meetings
   Potential locations: June 13 Library 413, July 11 Boardroom, August 8 Webster 114
   McDaniel suggested the Boardroom for June and Spiva Library 413 for July because new members will be present for the June meeting. Everyone was in agreement with the suggestions: Boardroom in June, Spiva Library in July and Webster in August.

2. Proposal for Handling Proposals (Communications Committee)
   Tessman presented this proposal during the Communications Committee report
   - Wengert made a motion to approve the proposal. Edwards seconded the proposal. It was noted this proposal does not go on to President’s Council. The motion was approved.

New Business:

Note: Items 3 and 4 were addressed first to allow Doak to leave for another meeting.

1. Code of Conduct Proposal (Ethics Committee)
   Wilmoth spoke for the proposal which was included with the agenda for senators to review prior to today’s meeting. We should be representatives of the staff and not have our own personal interests or goals in mind and represent to the best of our abilities what the staff wants. Wengert noted this would be a bylaw change.
Arwood mentioned the upcoming Legislative Oversight Committee will be reviewing and submitting bylaw changes. Would it be better to wait, make this proposal part of their suggested changes and submit one bylaw proposal to President’s Council? Wengert feels this bylaw addition needs to be in place before the new senators join the Senate. The bylaws were reviewed by the Ethics Committee and formatting changes need to take place; which can be done without President’s Council approval. In response to a senator’s question, Killingsworth advised the bylaw changes approved at the April meeting have been approved by President’s Council (adding the Parliamentarian position; one of the duties will be to chair the Legislative Oversight Committee). Arwood will convert the Code of Conduct proposal to the template requested by President’s Council.

- Harrington made a motion to approve this proposal and send it on to President’s Council. Talley seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

2. Review of Committee Assignments (delay until July; first meeting with new senators)

3. Allowing upper administration/department heads/directors to serve on Staff Senate (Elections Committee)

Doak asked for discussion on this topic; occasionally there have been comments about upper administration serving on Staff Senate along with a subordinate. Does the employee feel uncomfortable having their boss present? Arwood discussed this with her supervisor, Linda Eis, after Eis was nominated for a Staff Senate position. Eis does represent a segment of staff, an administrative level that may have issues to be addressed. Eis was comfortable with the “playing field being level” during Staff Senate meetings. Arwood feels it is up to the individuals, it is a personal issue if someone feels they can’t represent their area, not a senate issue. Killingsworth echoed Arwood’s comments. Wengert also agreed with Arwood’s comments and pointed out all this is addressed in the Code of Conduct Proposal; one of the intentions of the proposal is to protect the people in this room. Tessman noted a senator may not feel as free to speak, depending on the relationship they have with their supervisor or the current topic. Epperson added guests in the gallery may not feel free to speak for the same reasons. A guest expressed concerns she has heard from others that people feel very intimidated and do not attend meetings because of their supervisors and suggested we get more staff involved. Arwood suggested stereotypes need to be broken down and if a new senator reads through the Code of Conduct (not approved at the time of discussion; approved later) and feels they cannot comply, then they should reconsider serving.

4. Length of Term Adjustments (Elections Committee)

Doak advised the term lengths were staggered so not every senator would be leaving at the same time. Should we allow shorter terms? Is three years too long to serve? Killingsworth feels a three year term is valuable.

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:
Anonymous comments from the Staff Senate website (Staff Senate discussion/response in italics)

Received 4/26/2012 10:36 AM

Comments or suggestions: This has always bothered me since I have been on campus. The Median in front of Fred G. Hughes has weeds growing out of it. I don’t know if this is something that MSSU or the City is responsible for. I just think it looks bad and wouldn’t take much to take care of just some round up

Harrington advised it has been taken care off and noted it is a dangerous endeavor.

Killingsworth commented on the goal to keep meeting shorter.

Adjournment: Wengert made a motion to adjourn. Talley seconded the motion; motion carried.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 13, 2012 in Billingsly Board Room #310

Respectfully submitted by: Brenda McDaniel