

Staff Conference Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2014

Staff Conference
Whitton Auditorium
2:00 PM

Staff Assembly Members in Attendance:

Niki Behr, Rebecca Best, TJ Carney, Maria D'Agostino, Jeanie Faris, Debbie Garrick, Kelly McGinnis, Grant Scurry, Kelly Shelton, Gena Smith, Rosanne Wallace, Margaret Williamson

Staff Assembly Chair Margaret Williamson called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Agenda for meeting was displayed on screen.

- I. Welcome
- II. Introductions – Margaret introduced the Staff Assembly to the staff conference attendees.
- III. Mission Statement presented, terms explained
 - a. Staff Conference (all eligible staff)
 - b. Staff Assembly (13 elected representatives)
 - c. Staff Council (Staff Assembly officers)
- IV. WRHI and Herald Articles
 - a. The chair addressed the questions and concerns that have been brought to Staff Assembly members by staff since the interviews aired and the articles were published.
 - b. The chair addressed that she and several members of the Staff Council met with Dr. Comstock Williamson on May 13 to discuss impact. Discussion was frank and Margaret shared that staff morale was low.
- V. Staff Assembly Website was announced – www.winthrop.edu/staffassembly
 - a. Website will be up and running this week
 - b. Thanks to Kimberly Byrd and TJ Carney
- VI. Staff Assembly contact information was announced – staffassembly@winthrop.edu
Margaret Williamson (chair) and Grant Scurry (vice-chair) will check email.
- VII. The chair addressed committees sharing ideas Staff Assembly has for standing committees and requesting suggestions.
 - a. Standing Committee Ideas: Elections, Media and Communications, Campus and Community Involvement, Professional Development
 - b. Suggestion from attendees:
 - i. Recognition Committee – to recognize staff
 - ii. Admissions Committee – to promote important days to Winthrop enrollment/student, i.e. Winthrop Day, Preview Days, etc.
- VIII. The chair opened floor to questions and comments:
 - Question – About By-Laws, understanding the terms
 - Question – Middle management would find it helpful to understand better the process of review, raises, etc.
 - Question – Concern about the new Personnel Committee. Representation needs to include all parts of campus, including Student Life. How do we do that? Can Staff Assembly assist?
 - Question – What are the things that staff assembly are going to be doing?
 - Suggestion included: Volunteerism - Adopt-A-Highway given as an example
 - Announcement – Via the staff assembly website, there will be an anonymous online submission form for comments.

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- Suggestion – Study summer flex hours – Suggestion to collect data to see positive impact on staff morale and reduction in campus costs. The chair noted that concern about the variability in summer schedules across campus has been brought to her attention as a staff concern.
- Suggestion – Encourage increasing morale in ways beyond pay – Supervisors should be encouraged to openly discuss at review how work is appreciated, or that work can be delegated from one employee to others in office when work tasks become overwhelming.
- Announcement (HR representative) –
 - New Performance Evaluation coming ; performance appraisals will be mandatory; tied to job description; training will hopefully be offered to supervisors; universal date of performance appraisals will be November 1, 2014
- Question – Could we directly address the President’s email from May 19?
 - The Chair noted that Winthrop’s ability to meet enrollment goals will determine money for raises.
- Question – What are the specific enrollment goals for 2014-15? Will staff know these goals?
- Comment (Staff Assembly Vice Chair, Grant Scurry)– It is both an honor and humbling for Staff Assembly to have the opportunity to represent staff.
 - Encouraged staff to let us know how Assembly can be helpful.
- Comment – a plea to work together as a community; we are all responsible for recruitment.
- Comments/Suggestions – Communications Committee should help staff new to Winthrop and SC understand how monies get dispersed, how salaries and raises are determined; suggests that the President send out faculty/staff updates regarding state economic decisions that influence Winthrop like previous administration; suggested Staff Assembly get information out to staff.
- Question – What is going to happen to make Winthrop a non-smoking campus community?
 - Response: The chair responded that since the Council of Student Leaders (CSL) voted not to have a smoke-free campus, it was not going to happen at this time.
- Announcement (Staff Assembly Chair) – The recommendation to Staff Assembly that the Tillman chimes play the alma mater once a day has been shared with PAC.
- Question – Re: Staff Assembly communications – how will information be distributed? Web? Email?
 - Suggestions – distribute monthly newsletter by email, create listserv staff can opt in/out
- Question – Football – what’s happening there?
- Question – Will Staff Assembly be represented at Board of Trustees meetings?
 - Response – Staff Assembly chair responded that Board would like to see Staff Assembly show a history of involvement, including regular meeting, by-laws, etc. Chair informed Secretary to the Board that we had established officers (Staff Council), a schedule of meetings, and we were creating by-laws.
- Question – What happened with the results of the Chronicle of Higher Ed survey about the Best Places to Work?
- Question – Has the President agreed to continue to meet with Staff Assembly? Can/Should Staff Council get on the same cycle of meeting with the President as Faculty Conference officers?
- Question – how will staff announce that they are interested in being on a committee once they are formed?
 - A volunteer form can be added to the website.
- Comment (Staff Assembly Member, Gena Smith) – Standing committees are being discussed with the bylaws, and the bylaws will allow for ad hoc committees to be created
- Comment (Staff Assembly Chair) – it will make headway with the Trustees by having our committees formed.
- Question – Will we be having a Christmas float/participating in Christmas parade?
- Question – What are the goals of Staff Assembly? How will we show we are making progress toward those goals? (in reference to the Board of Trustees)
- Statement – Facilities Management employees do not feel included.
 - It is difficult when the grass has to be cut, and they are on a time crunch to make that happen.
- Question – How can we increase participation in Staff Conference?

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- Discussion – What are supervisors doing to encourage staff to attend? Would rotating Staff Conference meeting time/ location help with attendance? Does the current meeting time/location keep staff from attending or are there other factors?
- Comment – it may be more important that everyone know a set time for the meetings rather than trying to rotate the times at this point.
- Question – When will by-laws be completed? Chair indicated that the subgroup hoped to have them completed the following week.
- Question – How do we insure that staff concerns are heard by PAC? (initiating that process)
- Comment – Staff Assembly is the voice of the Staff. The Quicker we can be on the same footing as Faculty Conference the better.
 - We will know that we have value when this occurs.
 - Getting recognized by the Trustees is the number one priority. We should not have to prove our worth.
 - If we can make a difference on behalf of facilities management employees, that is a reason for more involvement from them.
 - Note: Big applause occurred after these comments.
- Announcement (Staff Assembly Chair) – The Staff Assembly chair (Margaret Williamson) and vice-chair (Grant Scurry) were introduced to the Board of Trustees at meeting on May 9. They plan to attend each meeting of the Board.
- Suggestion re: pursuing flex work hours – 6:00am – 2:00pm for example.
- Comment – staff member is encouraging her staff to attend the Staff Conference meetings.
- Comment (Staff Assembly member, Kelly Shelton) – Based on feedback she has received if we spend time on the weekends for community involvement that does not help.
- Comment – from a staff viewpoint, the faculty are placed on a pedestal, but we are all in this together. We need the same representation as faculty with the Board of Trustees.
- Facilities Management feels like they are not a part; as a group and University and we need to think about how we can change that mindset.
- Comment – a faculty member once asked this staff member to handle something that was not the staff responsibility and commented that ‘after all, you are staff’. Staff do not have the feeling of being welcomed.
 - Re: volunteerism: staff member does things for Rock Hill from a community service standpoint and does this on his own.
 - Staff member feels that discussing staff concerns is now part of our job, and doing so at a monthly staff meeting gives us that opportunity.
- Comment – When we frame our thoughts to remember that members of the Board of Trustees come from the state. There are faculty representatives to the board; they are not on the board. So we would be the staff representative to the board and not a voting member.
- Comment – The staff assembly needs to be given the chance to work and get started.
- Comment (Staff Assembly Chair) – Requests we be open minded as we begin this process.

Wrap-up:

- In the future, Staff Conference meetings will be kept to an hour unless there is a major issue, which may make the meeting go longer.
- Staff Assembly Parliamentarian, Debbie Garrick stated that Staff Assembly Chair will let staff know ahead of time if the meeting might go past an hour.