

**Staff Conference**  
**July 15, 2014**  
**Whitton Auditorium**  
**2:00 PM**

Staff Assembly Members in attendance: Rebecca Best, TJ Carney, Sharen DuBard, Jeanie Faris, Grant Scurry, Kelly McGinnis, Gena Smith, Niki Behr, Rosanne Wallace, and Margaret Williamson

Absent: Maria D'Agostino, Kelly Shelton, and Debbie Garrick

HR Representative present: Tina Purnell

Others present: Shawn Cetrone, University Relations, shooting video for a University Relations project

Call to Order:

Margaret (chair) called meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

Conference attendance: Including Staff Assembly members, approximately 80 staff in attendance today.

I. Updates

- Paint sign for the Paint Department is up in Facilities Management.
- Tillman chimes are playing the alma mater at 11:00 AM daily.
- Ombudsman - After last Staff Conference meeting (6-17-14), a staff member suggested that Winthrop needs an ombudsman. An **ombudsman** is someone designated by the university to function as a neutral party to assist all members of the university community. Many universities across the countries have Ombudsmen, including several public universities in SC. Margaret and Grant have talked with Dr. Debra Boyd (Acting Winthrop President) and she thinks it is a good idea – it is under advisement.

Suggestions to Staff Assembly website:

- Staff Assembly (Margaret) will send Agenda with Staff Conference meeting reminders
- Concern: After all of the information revealed and the events this summer, sender is worried that many employees will leave.
  - Response: We hope people will stay.
- Question regarding raises: Will the people who got the raises this year have those raises rescinded:
  - Response – No, state regulations were followed. Going forward, however, Personnel Committee and Board of Trustees will review any substantial raises

By-Laws Update:

Debra Boyd has them now for a final review.

II. Interim President

The Board of Trustees is not there yet with a decision. They will know more mid-August. Debra Boyd (Acting Pres.) is willing to be interim president if asked.

III. Committee Opportunities (overviews)

- Committees will be comprised of staff members.
- Each committee will have one (1) Staff Assembly member as part.
- We will form committees (types, interest, etc.) after 9-month staff employees return.
- What is the Recognition Committee? They will develop ways to recognize each other as employees for work well-done

#### IV. University Welcome-Back Event

- Typically held on First Friday of semester
- However, because we get Labor Day off, many staff/faculty may be out-of-town that weekend
- Welcome Back Event/Party will be a little later in semester this year; date not yet determined

#### V. Announcements

- October 21 Staff Conference Meeting – New Time for this date
  - 9:30-10:30 AM in Whitton Auditorium
- Staff Assembly is working with DeeAnna Brooks to plan for refreshments for the Staff Conference meeting after the October meeting.

#### VI. Open-Forum Questions

- Q: What determines what questions end up on Staff Assembly website (FAQ section)?
  - A: We haven't had many questions. If things come in that are important to post, we will.
- Q: When will committees be posted so interested staffers can sign up?
  - A: After 9-month staff employees return so that they are also included.
- Q: In Facilities, their summer schedule hours were changed last year and they no longer have summer hours. Why?
  - A: Staff Assembly will look into it.
- Q: Parking – Some institutions use a hangtag (placard) rather than a sticker. The hangtag allows the driver to switch cars more easily, not have to register more than 1 vehicle. Can Winthrop have a hangtag instead of sticker?
  - A: We'll look into it.
- Q: Are they still going to do a salary study?
  - A: Yes – a complete review within the institution.
- Q: Do we get merit raises?
  - A: Not at this time.
- Q: What about Christmas bonuses?
  - A: No.
- Q: Aramark employees get Christmas bonuses.
  - A: We have to be careful not to compare Aramark, a for-profit business, with Winthrop. We can ask the administration to consider something different than the reception at the president's house during the holidays.
- Q: How many 9-month staff do we have?
  - A: Not sure.
- Q: How do we increase attendance at Staff Conference?
- Comment: Perhaps once committees get started, more staff will be interested. We count on those in attendance to encourage colleagues to attend.
- Q: What about football?
  - A: University still exploring the possibilities.
- Q: Do you have any information about the interim search?
  - A: The interim search may be someone internal to Winthrop or someone external, and Board not yet ready for that process. The next presidential search will involve the campus community much more.
- Q: Does Winthrop ever think about having a big picnic for families?

- A: The University has a yearly picnic after convocation with whole community – faculty, staff, and students. This year, the Welcome Back event at the beginning of fall semester will be a family-friendly event.
- Q: Could staff have something on a smaller scale than the convocation picnic?  
Comment: Perhaps. Maybe some of these events will bring higher involvement in Staff Conference.
- Q: What's the possibility that an employee-of-the-month gets a free month's pass to West Center?
  - A: Perhaps there are some short-term pass possibilities we could explore. We could perhaps offer options from which an employee-of-the-month could choose.
- Q: If there were employee recognition opportunities, will all supervisors get involved? There could be supervisors who would not be participate and then some employees would be hurt.
  - A: There may be opportunities for all of staff to support/vote for each other so that supervisors' votes are not the only ones counted.
- Q: Could staff have a Christmas dinner or something at the holiday? Aramark does it.
  - A: Again, we have to be careful about comparing Winthrop to a for-profit organization like Aramark.
- Suggestion: Perhaps we have the ability to do some supportive things (tickets to events, etc.) through athletics.
- Suggestion: Perhaps people could wear their nametags so that we recognize each other around campus. (Noted that Facilities does not have or wear nametags – could be a safety hazard or at least difficult to keep up with while at work)
  - A: We could look into nametags.
- Q: Hearing all these great things, how will we pay for them? Perhaps we need a fundraising committee?
  - Comment: We cannot use state funds on food for state employees.
  - Comment: (Margaret) Some areas have Foundation funds they can work with.
- Q: Is the idea for staff to have a 'perk,' or for staff to have an opportunity for fellowship and getting together? If the idea is for fellowship, perhaps some staff events could have a small ticket price.
- Comment: Could staff have a pot luck dinner/event? College of Business does this.
- Comment: I thought the purpose (of Staff Conference) was to explore how we can make our jobs better, and make Winthrop better.
- Comment: There are many things that happen on campus (plays, events, sports) that could be promoted as a way to say thank-you or to honor employee of the month, etc. (free tickets, etc.)
- Comment (Margaret): The professional development committee, once formed, can begin to address the questions of, "How can I do my job better?" Staff Conference can't offer all of the perks suggested, but we can start to address issues.

Meeting came to a close with this announcement/reminder from Margaret:

- **August 19 – Next Staff Conference in Plowden Auditorium in Withers**