

Staff Assembly Minutes
July 1, 2014
Polly Ford Conference Room
2:00 PM

In attendance: Rebecca Best, Sharen Dubard, Jeanie Faris, Grant Scurry, Kelly McGinnis, Kelly Shelton, Gena Smith, Debbie Garrick, Niki Behr, Rosanne Wallace, Margaret Williamson
Absent: T.J. Carney and Maria D'Agostino
HR Representative present: Tina Purnell

Call to Order:

Margaret called meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

Margaret and Grant attended the Board of Trustees meeting on June 26. The Interim President could be either an internal or external candidate, and the Board will wait to begin addressing that until later in the summer. New committees were established by the Board, including a committee for recruitment and retention, which Eduardo Prieto, VP of Access and Enrollment Management, will staff. The Board also created a new committee on compensation to review substantial pay increases and contracts that extend beyond the president's.

Ombudsman

After last Staff Conference, a staff member recommended to Sharen and Kelly M. that Winthrop needs an ombudsman. The staff member provided research and details on an ombudsman, including a long list of colleges and universities that have ombudsmen, including several public institutions in South Carolina: USC, Clemson, Coastal Carolina, and College of Charleston. Staff Assembly can look into this.

Definition: An ombudsman is someone designated by the university to function as an impartial and neutral resource to assist all members of the university community.

Updates on Progress

Margaret updated Staff Assembly on progress of suggestions from last Staff Conference –

- The alma mater did not play today at 11:00 AM (it played at 2:00 PM); it will begin being played daily at 11:00 AM going forward.
- Paint sign for the Paint Department has been ordered.
- We will post meeting dates and locations on the Staff Assembly website.
- Facilities Management staff – Approximately 25 Facilities Management staff work a shift that ends at 12:00 PM, which is before the Staff Conference meetings begin at 2:00 PM.
 - Suggestion: Can we have a Staff Conference meeting at a different time?
 - Response: Yes – the October Staff Conference meeting will be at 9:30 AM.
- Suggestion: Free discussion for staff, perhaps on Facebook
 - Response: A free discussion like the type suggested is not available; Facebook is not anonymous or private. However, Staff Conference is the open forum for staff discussion. Staff are encouraged to attend and continue sharing their ideas, suggestions, and concerns.

- Debbie and other Staff Assembly members received positive feedback about Dr. Debra Boyd, now Acting President, attending last Staff Conference: it was great that she was present to alleviate fears and answer questions.

Anonymous Comments Link from Webpage

- It may be effective to again address how the anonymous comments link works for Staff Assembly. Those comments go to Margaret and Grant and can be anonymous if the sender wishes them to be.
- In reflection of our mission, Staff Assembly members should always be sensitive to staff issues and to fostering an open exchange of ideas.
- Staff Assembly will explore the possibility of an additional line being added to the online comments form. This could be a check box where the sender indicates if he/she would like his or her concern addressed at the Staff Conference vs. just being addressed at the smaller Staff Assembly.

By-Laws Update

- HR sent to attorney for review, as they did with the by-laws for Faculty Conference. Our by-laws are not back yet from the attorney.
- We need to form committees. Staff Assembly will participate in committees as well, and different members have expressed interest in the different committees.
 - Campus and Community Involvement – Kelly Shelton
 - Elections – Becky Best
 - Recognition – Niki Behr
 - Communications – Maria D’Agostino and T.J. Carney
 - Professional Development – Sharen DuBard and Gena Smith
- Staff Assembly by-laws includes wording about assembly members’ participation in committees and we want to be sure the language used is clear and assembly members understand their involvement

Discussion: How did we get committees going?

- We should wait until 9-month staff employees return in August to be sure they are included
- We can place committees on the Staff Assembly website, invite staff who are interested in participating to select their top 3 choices, first come, first serve
- We will put committees on Staff Assembly website in September, and email campus community so that they can make selections

What are next steps?

- Welcome meeting with refreshments – will be better to have in September than August
- How can we increase attendance at Staff Conference meetings? How can we encourage staff to attend?
- Tina recommended reaching out to new staff with a welcome letter from Staff Assembly
- To reach the campus –
 - Use announcements
 - Post signs around campus – can we post the 2-sided signs on stands that are like the ones Athletics uses? We will explore.
 - Raffles, perhaps, or giveaways of some type