

## **Staff Conference Meeting**

### **Whitton Auditorium**

**July 21, 2015**

Meeting called to order at 2:01 pm

Members present: Grant Scurry, Niki Behr, Laura Little, Kelly Shelton, Jeanie Faris, Kelly McGinnis, TJ Carney, Rebecca Best, Kara Traverse, Janell Stevens

Members absent: Jill Simpson, Johnathan Brabson, Maria D'Agostino

Approximately 144 staff members attending (includes assembly members)

### **Approval of Minutes**

The Staff Assembly has reviewed and approved the minutes from June 16<sup>th</sup>. As a reminder, they will be placed on the website after the assembly has reviewed and approved them. Click on Meetings under the Our Work Section on the website to access the minutes from the previous meetings once they have been voted and approved.

### **Dr. Mahony, President**

Dr. Mahony began his address to the staff conference stating how honored he is to be here at Winthrop and is appreciative of the overwhelming support the Winthrop community has shown. The Mahony's have received consistent support since they interviewed, which has attributed to the smooth transition. He appreciates it and it is a great feeling after making the decision to join us at Winthrop.

Now what happens? We take steps to determine the future direction for the institution for the next five to ten years. He intends to make this an inclusive process to involve the entire community and its stake holders. He assures the staff that their voice will still be heard and involved in the process. The next steps will include strategic planning, a view on how our institution is currently successful, and to determine ways to measure our success. There are clear goals that we will need to address such as student recruitment, retention and success and how we can do those better. Another area to address is employee satisfaction which can be accomplished through methods of compensation and non-compensation. We need to focus on our government and community relations, being actively involved but still making sure the priorities for that involvement keep us in line with Winthrop's priorities. We need to focus on being fiscally strong and creating a budget model that has our funds going to areas in line with our priorities. We need to focus on a culture of philanthropy on our campus, as it is not one group's responsibility. As committees are developed to review these initiatives, he will make sure they will include faculty, staff, and students so that each area has representation.

**Question:** Do you have any more information regarding the \$800 bonus for state employees?

The bonus should be expected around October 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Question:** Do you have any updates on actions that will be taken regarding the renaming of Tillman?

Debra Boyd started addressing this particular issue while she was acting president. There is a committee already assembled that has been discussing the issue and talking about other measures that can be taken to validate the concern and we will start working on those, even if the result is not renaming Tillman. Dr. Mahony is aware that the Speaker of the House will not be bringing it up again.

**Question:** What efforts will you work on to partner with the Rock Hill community?

Dr. Mahony began researching the history of Rock Hill and Winthrop to have a good background when he is considering the future direction of Winthrop. Through that research, he realized that Rock Hill and Winthrop have historically focused on moving forward and both have a 'can-do' spirit. He is aware of the downtown and Knowledge Park initiatives and realizes Winthrop will benefit as the Rock Hill community improves. He will review proposals and how to get involved while considering what is best for Winthrop. At this point, there are no proposals that can be implemented. Once we are presented with numbers and official proposals, we will participate in as many win/win opportunities as we can.

**Question:** Will you be meeting with departments individually in order to address morale issues?

It is too early to define how or what the morale issues are but he is committed to listening. The committee that he assembles will decide how to gather that information. We want to avoid actions that would detract from the employee morale as he has seen efforts at previous institutions that did not achieve the desired results. The decisions that are easier to make will be made on a quicker timeframe but those that take longer will be reviewed throughout the year and he hopes to have more ideas laid out by the end of the year.

### **Dr. Nicholson, Vice President for Institutional Advancement Supporting the Mission of Winthrop University**

Dr. Nicholson is delighted that the president is interested in fund raising and supportive of building those relationships with current and potential donors. State funding since 1980 has significantly reduced by 66% in the past three decades and when forecasting future support will mean that state support will be at 0% by the year 2031. How do we raise that money? Increasing tuition puts that burden on the backs of our students.

Based on the demographics of our state and culture, increasing tuition each year prevents the neediest of students from enrolling. Where will the money come from? Alumni, Corporations, and Friends of Winthrop. It is time to call on those that truly love Winthrop University and the stake holders of our institution. We need to communicate our mission with conviction and Connect, Educate, and Inspire. They are working to expand our touch with one effort being a change in phone systems where they are able to reach 340,000 verses 50,000 in previous years. Do relationships matter? Absolutely. There are buildings named after loved ones and those friends that sacrificed for our school. Those are named not for money but for meaning. We need to realize the importance of what you love and what you want to make stronger. Tell your Winthrop story. And feel free to call their office if you have anything to share or have questions.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

#### **Elections and Nominations**

Nominations are open for the position representing the AEM division. Voting will probably be the first week of August. Becky Best will work with the committee to see if voting can open prior to that date.

#### **Media and Communications**

Shelley Jones is requesting updates from departments, your office or your family. The bonus information could be found on the Facebook page as well so they encourage everyone to like the page to stay informed on current issues. The next issue is scheduled for the beginning of August.

#### **Professional Development**

Brett Best provided updates regarding current initiatives to include a monthly moveable feast. As a department is willing to host, staff members will be welcome to come and meet those employees in that office. Another idea is Donuts and Coffee where staff members can meet those on campus and enjoy getting together over breakfast and all it would require is a few boxes of donuts.

They have received a few requests for financial information with the ideas ranging from younger employees wanting financial advice to retirement questions. There are a few banks in the area that are willing to provide this information that would be soliciting their products but provide information on financial literacy.

Another idea would be to have a cultural event challenge between departments and the area with the most participation would receive a prize.

#### **Campus and Community Involvement**

They are looking forward to a special guest Grant Scurry at their August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss the mission statement of the committee and to define what is included in community. A few ideas they are working on include 1) Farmer's exchange where you

would get to brag on the produce that you have grown, 2) Halloween Costume contest per department, 3) Homecoming decorations for offices, 4) Cookie Swap in Dinkins. They will need at least 20 people to participate, 5) Pink-out day in October.

### **Recognition**

The deadline for July employee of the month (EOM) nominations is July 31<sup>st</sup>. As a reminder, nominations are taken during that month but the EOM is announced in the next month as the previous month's recipient. For example, if you nominated someone July 1-31 for July EOM, they will be recognized at the next staff conference meeting in August.

For the month of July, there were 44 nominations for 35 people.

The employee of the month for June is Brenda Knox.

### **Questions/Comments**

Thanks to Kimberly Byrd and TJ Carney for updating the feedback form to include permissions for the commenter's issue to be discussed at the assembly meetings.

May we share your feedback anonymously at the next Staff Conference meeting?

Choose : Yes/No

Response to anonymous question regarding the timing and receiving late notifications of the Retirement contributions increase.

Lisa Cowart provided more information that Winthrop sends the information once it is received from the State. While they may know the increase is coming, they must wait on the legislative process and it is not a quick process. Based on the late timing of that update, the retirement update was provided as soon as it was available and was unfortunately so close to the timing actual increase on paychecks.

Next Staff Conference: Tuesday, August 18, at 2:00pm, in Whitton Auditorium

Meeting adjourned at 2:52 pm