

Winthrop University
Staff Conference Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2019
Dina's Place

Staff Assembly Present: Johnathan Brabson, Kara Cauthen, Nicole Chisari, Thomas Cornelius, Julia Fockler, April Hershey, Lydia Johnson, Wes Love, Kelly McGinnis, Kirk McSwain, Brittany Neely, Linda O'Connor

Absent: Alicia Marstall, Jessica Martin

Staff in attendance: Approximately 40

Meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m. by Nicole Chisari, chair

Nicole thanked everyone for his or her support during her time as Chair of Staff Conference. Today is her last meeting. She stated that she is leaving Staff Conference in the good hands of Linda O'Connor. Linda will be the new Chair, as of July 1.

The President was presented with the following questions:

A lot of news about schools offering a four-day school week. Has Winthrop ever discussed or looked at going to a four-day school week? I worked with a college that had a four-day school week and not only was this an incentive for student recruitment; employees were less stressed, which reduced turnover. Operational costs were impacted by one less day of keeping the facility open.

President Mahony answered that he would need to know more about the academic or summer portion of the year at this facility mentioned in the question. This would also send a message to the state that we do not need facilities for 5 days a week. It would also be hard to fit all the classes into 4 days a week. He also emphasizes to our incoming students to stay on campus for the weekend, this would not be helpful in keeping students here. He is very happy that staff can work the summer hours, maybe this would be something we could do all year.

Can we establish a minimum training period requirement before new systems are put in place? For example, the student hiring system overhaul came with very little notice and thus far no training. Most faculty responsible for hiring are off contract until the beginning of the fall semester. This puts the majority of the work required to implement this new required system during one of the busiest seasons for academic units. It also puts a large amount of work on the staff who were given little to no opportunity for input about this change. Had there been more notice given about upcoming changes, a training, and set-up period for everyone to submit before position descriptions and get them loaded to the new system before this process disrupts and possible delays hiring, it would have been a much smoother process. Establishing a minimum training period would help when new systems roll out in the future (and would ease staff anxiety about the ever-changing ways in which we do our jobs).

Lisa Cowart answered: There would probably not be training period when new systems are purchased. She is unaware of a way to do this. She stated that this question stems from the People Admin software that will be used for student hiring. There will be training set-up in July for persons involved in this process. This new system will save a lot of time for everyone.

Why are we financially supporting Esports if the team can win cash? Can we use some of those winnings to fund the program?

President answered that we may not be able to support them with their winnings if they do not win. If they are successful, the prize money could be split between the program and the housing, tuition of the student. Small amounts of prize money will not make a difference.

Why does the Board of Trustees have to review the job postings and hiring of everyone, including staff?

Lisa answered: The Board of Trustees asked that we implement this process during this current fiscal year. The Board reviews and makes the decision, along with HR; if the job needs to be posted now or later or do, we need to post it all. This process has saved some money this year. The Board of Trustees will make the decision if we will continue this process for the upcoming fiscal year. They are not approving the position, just reviewing when and if we need it at all.

Someone asked since the Board of Trustees only meets quarterly, if this delays the process of posting positions. A criteria is set-up with how quickly the information gets to the members of the board and they can approve this via email, if needed.

What is the University's plan for responding to the presence of an individual on campus previously deemed by a staff member to be dangerous or disruptive to the Winthrop community? The staff member's concern could involve current or former students; current or former faculty/staff members and the members of the community.

If an employee feels uncomfortable or threatened by a visitor, what should they do?

Nicole spoke to Chief Scoggins, IT and HR about these issues. If you feel that a person is dangerous or disruptive, please call campus police. If this involves a student, please call the Dean of Student's office. If it is an employee, please call HR. If you feel an immediate threat, contact campus police. There is no need to contact your supervisor first.

What are the standards for people becoming students if they have a history of unbecoming conduct?

We do not look at criminal backgrounds of our students. The Graduate School does do background checks for some of their students depending on their majors.

Recent grads' card ID access ends quickly. Is there a similar timeline for the ID's of current/former students and current/former employees?

The ID's are linked to admitted students; the student does not have to be registered to have a valid ID. Graduates lose their access upon graduation. If we voided the ID's for non-registered students, it would cause an issue with orientation.

President also updated us on the enrollment numbers, freshman applications are up by approximately 100, and we have two orientations this week. Transfer applications are up about 50. He asked that we all be welcoming to our orientation participants.

He also added that the state budget is completed. The Board of Trustees will be review and hopefully approve the budget next week at the June meetings. We will then know the budget numbers and if there will be an increase in tuition or housing.

Dr. Jack DeRochi, Graduate School, presented information for the Graduate School. He reported that the on-line classes have been up and running for a year now. The enrollment is currently flat for the graduate school. The campus-based programs have enrollment numbers that are decreasing. They are currently working on adding more weekend programs and incentives to get more students. The online application numbers are up and some programs will be changing with the times due to admission standards. They are currently working on adding more programs online. He believes that they will add between 50 to 80 new students for the fall enrollment.

Katie Dykhuis, Graduate School, spoke on what is happening in the Graduate school. She volunteered at the Taste of Charlotte recently and promoted Winthrop and York County. She stated that she currently has 153 professional development students enrolled. These are folks seeing keeping their accreditations and or certifications. Programs are constantly changing, so the Graduate School has to stay proactive on updating our program requirements.

Dr. Pat Guilbaud, Graduate School, spoke on the BS, Professional Studies that will launch Spring of 2020. This program is geared to adult learning. We have obtained SACS approval. Currently he has approximately 30 people interested in this program and they are working on a marketing program. They will be hiring a staff person for their outreach program.

Nicole announced that we have six members who terms are expiring at the end of June. Julia Fockler, Wes Love, Alicia Marstall, Kelly McGinnis, April Hershey and herself. We have filled all open positions but one (HR) and the email for voting was forthcoming from Becky Best.

Reminder the Professional Development Seminar is next week, June 26 & 27. The last day to register is June 20.

Miranda presented the five nominations for Staff Member of the Month and the winner this month was Jamie Ray from Communications and marketing.

Linda O'Connor then spoke as the incoming Chair. She said that she has some new ideas and is scheduling guest speakers for the upcoming year. She encourages all staff to join a committee and stated that "no one should work alone." Please reach out to her with any suggestions or ideas.

Next Staff Conference will be at Dina's Place on Tuesday, July 16, at 2 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.