

Chair Report: Shannon Harr

- *Chair Harr reported Staff Congress officer elections will be conducted next month during the June meeting. Chair Harr will not be running for re-election. Secretary Crisp will not be seeking re-election because her term limit is up and she is not eligible to run for secretary. The communication position will be elected, but might not be funded. Chair Harr will try to have that worked out before the June meeting.
- *Staff Congress will have their year-end luncheon prior to the June meeting in either the Commonwealth or Eagle Dining Room. More details will be emailed to members once plans have been confirmed.
- *Chair Harr could not attend the last President’s Leadership Council meeting because he had to pick up one of the Provost candidates from the airport; however, the voluntary buyout that is currently on the table for MSU employees was discussed during the meeting. Mr. Gniot is here today and will be able to answer any questions during his report.
- *The Provost Search Committee will be meeting this week and will discuss how to go forth with the search for a candidate. The preferred candidate was not interested in the position.

Vice-Chair Report: Craig Dennis

>Vice Chair Dennis reported the Staff Congress website is up-to-date and he is working with Darrell Smith (IT) to make further modifications and additions to the Staff Congress webpage over the summer. If anyone sees any needed changes, please contact him by email or phone.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS

The Credentials and Elections Committee is recommending for appointment the following to be members of Staff Congress for 2014-2015:

- ◇ Shannon Harr (Professional/Non-Faculty)
- ◇ Margaret Lafontaine (Professional/Non-Faculty)
- ◇ Jill McBride, Area 2 Representative

These members will serve for one year per the bylaws. They can run for re-election next year if they choose to do so. These positions were not filled during the normal election in April. A vacancy in the service/maintenance category remains.

MOTION: To accept the three appointments for Staff Congress member for 2014-2015 as brought forth by the Credentials and Elections Committee.

PROPOSED: Rep. Hitchcock **SECONDED:** Rep. Sexton **CALLED FOR VOTE: PASSED**

Upcoming EAGLE Events

NO ELECTRIC: Athletic Complex **Week of May 12th**

Water and Steam Outage **May 16 - 22**

Summer Intersession **May 19–30**

MEMORIAL DAY
NO CLASSES OR OFFICE HOURS **Monday, May 26th**

Next Staff Congress Meeting
1:00 p.m. (Riggle Room, ADUC)



June 2, 2014





STAFF CONGRESS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

In order to create a stronger bond within the staff, to promote cooperation among the administration, faculty, students, and staff at Morehead State University, we, the staff of this university, do establish a representative body to be known as the Staff Congress.

Logon to the Staff Congress Website

via the **PORTAL**—We can be found under **Employee Services**



Please click here to submit a Staff Concern

Click here to view and register for the latest Professional Development sessions

Benefits & Compensation: Committee Chair Amy Moore

*No report

Credentials & Elections: Committee Chair Lora Pace

*Committee Vice-Chair Niles reported the Staff Congress elections were held last month and the turnout was good. There are four positions that were not filled: two in the professional/non-faculty category, one in the Area 2 category, and one in the service/maintenance category. The committee has recommendations to fill three of the vacancies. These will be brought up for a vote in "New Business."

*Staff Congress officer elections will be conducted during the June meeting. Representatives will receive an email that explains the process. The deadline for officer nominations will be Friday, May 16th. Each candidate must create a written statement of interest. These statements will be sent to members for consideration before the vote in June.

Staff Issues: Committee Chair Kenna Allen

*Committee Chair Allen reported there was one written staff concern submitted via the website. The concern was regarding torn shower curtains, soap dispensers falling off the wall, and the need for hair dryers and coat racks in the men's facility at the Recreation and

Wellness Center. Rep. Kell addressed the issues in the concern. Rep. Kell stated shower curtains are being ordered from a new vendor and should be replaced next month. The soap dispensers have been replaced. There is not a safe place to put hair dryers in the men's locker room because they do not have a vanity area as appears in the women's locker room. The men have a full-length mirror in their locker room and the women do not have one in their locker room, so some things are a trade-off. There is not space in the men's locker room for a coat rack that will not cause the space to be cluttered. Also, there has been a rash of thefts at the Recreation & Wellness Center and hanging coats on an open, unsecure rack will only encourage further thefts.

*There have been a lot of phone calls regarding the upcoming water outage scheduled for May 16-22. There was one particular question regarding the legality of opening buildings when there will not be water for the sprinkler systems in buildings. The State Fire Marshall has been involved in all discussions, and the local fire department, along with fire departments in surrounding counties, are aware of the situation and will be on alert during this time. Executive washrooms with individual stalls will be placed around campus. Staff Regent Thacker indicated the washrooms will be in the following locations: parking lot behind Howell McDowell, behind the library, behind Combs Building, and close to the Recreation and

Wellness Center. Facilities hope to have the water on by Sunday night, May 18th, but will have the washrooms on campus in the event they were unable to restore service. Jayne Stadium, the AAC, Enrollment Services, the Education Services Building (old courthouse), and the houses behind Howell McDowell and Claypool Young the university uses for office space will still have water as they are not on the same system. There will be a boil water advisory in effect and the steam will continue to be off for repairs in the tunnel even if the water is back on by Monday. Steam is used for hot water in buildings and buildings will also feel colder without the steam in service. The boil water advisory will be in effect until the state testing lab gives the all-clear.

Sustainability Committee: Committee Chair Benji Bryant

*Rep. Bryant reported Holly Niehoff will reschedule the presentation she was going to give today. She is off-campus due to illness. The Chair of the Sustainability Committee resigned, and Holly Niehoff was appointed Chair. *RecycleMania was very positive and recycling has been good across campus. *President Andrews signed an Earth Day declaration. *The committee is still collecting carbon neutral data to give to the President.

Staff Regent Report: Mr. Todd Thacker

Staff Regent Thacker reported he has received the agenda for Thursday's Board of Regents workshop. Most of the agenda was regarding ethics of the board and information about internal and external audits. There was no budget information included. Staff Regent Thacker reported he also received July salary information for his direct reports and there are now different grade scales.

Cabinet Report: Ms. Beth Patrick

Ms. Patrick was unable to attend and no report was submitted.

Mr. Gniot discussed the new grade scale. There are currently more grades than before and there is a broad overlap between exempt and non-exempt positions. HR now has more flexibility to add grades. HR used College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) data to adjust the grades. Exempt and non-exempt employees can now be in the same grade. Mr. Gniot will do a presentation at the June meeting about the new grade scales. The new grade and salary information has been released to the management groups to share with their employees.

Appropriate MSU staffing will continued to be stressed with continued state funding cuts. MSU spends 60% of our budget dollars on personnel. We need to have a reduction in personnel so MSU is offering a voluntary employee buyout to entice employees to leave university employment. MSU had two approaches they could take: (1) voluntary buyouts or (2) involuntary reductions in the workforce. MSU has chosen to go with the voluntary employee buyout approach. Employees with at least five years of service, not in a grant-funded or fixed-term position, or not under an employment contract are eligible for the voluntary buyout. Two options will be made available to staff:

- **OPTION 1: Employee will receive 1/4 of annual salary and \$500 for each year of service to MSU**
- **OPTION 2: Employee will receive 1/2 of annual salary**

Dates to **leave university employment** will be **June 30, July 31, August 31, or September 30**. Additional incentives for those employees taking the voluntary buyout include:

- One-time HRA contribution of \$1,500 (*HR has amended the plan temporarily so the maximum amount in an HRA account could be \$7,500 instead of \$6,000 to accommodate the buyout plan*)
- Tuition assistance equal to 24 credit hours for employee, spouse, or children that can be used in any combination. These credits must be completed by spring 2017.

There has been a good response to the buyout plan. Many employees have stopped by HR to ask questions or find out the amount of money the buyout would mean for them if they pursued this option. MSU has an objective of \$8 million in savings. HR hopes to approve everyone who applies for the buyout option and are optimistic the goal will be met. If several people want to leave one unit, the separation dates may have to be staggered. Employees taking the buyout would receive the monetary compensation on the 15th of the month after leaving MSU employment. **If there is not enough interest in the voluntary approach, then it is possible that involuntary reductions in the workforce will occur.** It is probable that approximately 1/2 of these positions will be refilled at some point. Divisions will work with HR to decide which positions are considered critical and need of being filled. The voluntary employee buyout has the following limitations:

- **If a person resigns, they will not be eligible to be rehired in a benefit-eligible position for three years**
- **If a person retires, they will never be eligible to be rehired in a benefit-eligible position**

If anyone thinks of any other questions or points of concern, please feel free to email Mr. Gniot or Chair Harr. Chair Harr will relay the questions/concerns to Mr. Gniot.

Members of Staff Congress posed the following questions:

Q: What if the employee is close to retirement but won't meet the 9/30/14 deadline?

A: HR would work with that person to explore the possibility of extending the time they would have to leave on the buyout.

Q: Can employees use buyout dollars to purchase service time?

A: Yes, but it is more expensive to purchase time in KTRS; KRS is easier

Q: With the federal taxes, will employees be taxed at the same rate as their normal paycheck or will the buyout dollars be considered a windfall elimination?

A: A large lump sum payout would be considered a windfall elimination, so the tax rate would be higher than normal. Employees can raise their deductions temporarily to lower the withheld taxes or put the money pre-tax into a 403B or 457 account. If employees don't have an account, they can start one with one of the MSU vendors.

Q: How would the buyout dollars count towards retirement?

A: For KTRS, the buyout money would not count in wages, so no retirement money would be held out of the buyout funds. For KRS, retirement funds would be deducted from the buyout dollars. KTRS and KRS counselors will be on campus this week. KTRS will bring two counselors and there are seven people on a waiting list. KRS will bring three counselors and there are five or six people on a waiting list.

Q: Is there any information available to employees about reductions in force, except PG 58 (Reduction in Full-Time Staff Work Force)?

A: Not at this time. If voluntary reductions in force occur, information would be emailed to employees.

Q: When would we know about involuntary reduction in force?

A: Probably sometime in June after the numbers of the voluntary buyout are known. There would be an analysis stage and the timeline would have to be approved.

Q: What is the deadline to apply for the voluntary buyout?

A: The deadline has been extended to June 9th. Employees will be notified about a week later and then they will have one week to reconsider.

Q: What happens if we don't meet the required number of buyouts?

A: There could be involuntary reductions in force where all divisions would be affected. Reductions in force would not be limited by the fiscal year, but HR would probably recommend that all reductions in force happen all at once. HR is hopeful the voluntary buyout numbers will be met and that involuntary reductions in force will not have to be considered.

Q: Would people who have retired in the past and then were rehired be targeted for an involuntary reduction in force?

A: They will not be targeted more than anyone else. If a person was rehired and has been back for more than five years they would be eligible to consider the voluntary buyout.

Q: In reference to raises, what percentage of exempt staff got a raise?

A: Most got something.

Q: How was the time in position calculated?

A: If exempt staff has questions about how their time in position was calculated, they need to speak with Mr. Gniot in HR.