

**MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY  
STAFF CONGRESS MINUTES  
May 5, 2014**

**MEMBERS:**

Kenna Allen	Shannon Harr	Margaret LaFontaine	Brooke Mills	Clarissa Purnell
Sheila Barber*	Paul Hitchcock	Amanda Lewis*	Amy Moore	Gabria Sexton
Benji Bryant	Joe Hunsucker	Patty Little	Kerry Murphy	Ernie Tackett
Rhonda Crisp	Michelle Hutchinson	Paige McDaniel	Scott Niles	Barbara Willoughby
Jason Dailey	Travis Jolley	Rebecca McGinnis	Lora Pace	Donnie Willoughby*
Craig Dennis	Yvette Kell	Tina McWain*	Ray Perry*	

\*Denotes member was absent.

<b>Guests:</b>	Phil Gniot, HR Director; & Todd Thacker, Staff Regent
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Chair Harr called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

<b>Motion:</b>	To approve the minutes from the April 7, 2014 meeting	
	<b>Proposed:</b> Rep. Hitchcock	<b>Seconded:</b> Rep. Purnell
<b>Called for Vote:</b>	Motion passed.	

<b>Chair's Report</b>	<p>Chair Harr reported that Staff Congress officer elections will be next month. Chair Harr is not running for Chair again. Secretary Crisp will not be running because her term limit is up and she is not eligible to be secretary. The communications position will be elected, but might not be funded. Chair Harr will try to have that worked out before the June meeting.</p> <p>We will be having our end-of-year meal in June in either the Commonwealth Room or the Eagle Dining Room. More details will be emailed to members at a later date.</p> <p>Chair Harr couldn't attend the last leadership council meeting because he had to pick up one of the Provost candidates from the airport. The voluntary buyout was discussed during the meeting. Mr. Gniot is here today and can answer any questions. The Provost search committee will be meeting in the morning. The preferred Provost candidate was not interested in the position.</p>
<b>Vice-Chair's Report</b>	<p>Vice-Chair Dennis reported the website is up-to-date and he is working with Darrell Smith on the Staff Congress webpage. They will be making some changes over the summer. If you see changes that are needed, please email or give him a call.</p>
<b>Secretary's Report</b>	<p>Secretary Crisp reported the supply balance is \$1,944.93. \$29.63 was spent in April on refreshments.</p>

**Committee Reports**

<b>Benefits &amp; Compensation</b>	No report.
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<b>Credentials &amp; Elections</b>	<p>Committee Vice-Chair Niles reported that 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 two 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'.</p> <p>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 16. Each candidate must create a written statement of interest. These statements will be sent to members for consideration.</p>
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<b>Staff Issues</b>	<p>Committee Chair Allen reported there was one written staff concern about 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 reported that they are ordering curtains from a new vendor and they should be replaced by next month. The soap dispensers have been replaced. There is nowhere to put hair dryers in the men's locker room, but men have a full-length mirror and women don't. There is not space in either locker room to accommodate a coat rack. There has been a rash of thefts at the Recreation Center and hanging coats on a community rack only encourages thefts.</p> <p>There have been a vast number of phone calls received about the campus water outage scheduled for May 16-22. There was one question about the legality of opening buildings when there is no water for the sprinkler system. The state fire marshal has been involved in all discussions and the fire departments in surrounding counties are aware of the situation and will be on high alert. Executive washrooms with individual stalls will be placed around campus. Staff Regent Thacker said that these washrooms must have water and electricity, so they will be placed in the following locations that are close to the utilities needed: parking lot behind Howell-McDowell, behind the Library, behind Combs, and close to the Recreation and Wellness Center. They are hoping to have the water back on by Sunday night, May 18, but will have the executive washrooms in case of a worse-case scenario. Jayne Stadium, the AAC, Enrollment Services, the Education Services Building (old courthouse) and houses that the university uses for office space will still have water. There will be a boil water advisory and the steam will still be off for repairs in the tunnel even if the water is back on by Monday. Steam is used for hot water and buildings will feel colder without the steam.</p>
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<b>Sustainability Committee</b>	Rep. Bryant reported that Holly Niehoff will reschedule her presentation. She was off campus due to sickness today. The Chair of the committee resigned, so Holly was appointed as Chair. Recycle Mania was very positive
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	and recycling has been good across campus. The president signed an Earth Day declaration. The committee will still be collecting carbon neutral data going forward.
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**Regent's Report:** Staff Regent Thacker reported he has received the agenda for Thursdays Board of Regents workshop. Most of the agenda was about ethics of the board and information about internal and external audits. There was no budget information included.

He received July salary information for his staff. There are different grade scales now.

**Human Resources Report:** Phil Gniot discussed the new grade scale. There are more grades than before and there is a broad overlap between exempt and non-exempt positions. HR now has more flexibility to add grades. They used 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.

Tomorrow is the employee appreciation picnic. Come and get a free lunch!

There will continue to be a stress on staffing at MSU with continued state funding cuts, since 60% of MSU budget dollars are spent 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: voluntary buyouts (carrot approach) or involuntary reductions in force (stick approach). MSU has chosen to go with the voluntary 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 available for staff:

- Option 1: employee will receive  $\frac{1}{4}$  of annual salary and \$500 for each year of service to MSU
- Option 2: employee will receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  of annual salary

Dates to leave university employment would be: June 30, July 31, August 31, or September 30.

Incentives include:

- One-time \$1500 contribution to HRA account (HR amended the plan temporarily so that the maximum amount in an HRA account could be \$7500 instead of \$6000 to accommodate the buyout plan.)
- Tuition Assistance for 24 credit hours for employee, spouse, or children that can be used in any combination. These credits must be completed by spring of 2017.

There has been a good response to the buyout plan. Many employees have been stopping by HR to ask questions or find out the amount of money the buyout would mean for them. MSU has an objective of \$8 million. They are hoping to approve everyone who applies and are hopeful we will meet the numbers needed. If several people want to leave one unit, they might have to stagger leave dates. Employees taking the buyout would receive the buyout dollars on the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 force will occur.

Probably about one-half of the positions will be refilled. Divisions will work with HR to decide which positions are considered critical and need to be refilled.

There are re-employment limitations with the plan:

- 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

Questions included:

- What if an employee is close to retirement, but won't meet the 9/30/14 deadline? HR would work with that person to explore the possibility of extending the time they would have to leave on the voluntary buyout.
- Can employees use buyout dollars to purchase service time? Yes, but it is more expensive to purchase time in KTRS. KRS is easier.
- 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 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.
- How would the buyout dollars count towards retirement? 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.
- Is there any other information available to employees about reductions in force, except PG 58 (Reduction in Full-Time Staff Work Force)? Not at this time. If involuntary reductions in force occur, information would be emailed to employees.
- When would we know about an involuntary reduction in force? Probably sometime in June after the numbers for the voluntary buyout are known. There would be an analysis stage and the timeline would have to be approved.
- What is the deadline to apply for the voluntary buyout? The deadline has been extended to June 9. Employees will be notified about a week later and then will have one week to reconsider.
- What happens if we don't meet the required number of buyouts? 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 that the voluntary buyout numbers will be met and that involuntary reductions in force will not have to be considered.
- Would people who have retired in the past and then were rehired, be targeted for an involuntary reduction in force? They will not be targeted more than anyone else. If a person was rehired and has been back for more than five years, then they would be eligible to consider the voluntary buyout.

- In reference to raises, what percentage of exempt staff got a raise? Most got something.
- How was time in position calculated? If exempt staff has questions about how their time in position was calculated, they need to talk to Mr. Gniot in HR.

If you think of other questions after the meeting, email Mr. Gniot or Chair Harr and he will talk with Mr. Gniot and relay the information.

**Cabinet Report:** No report.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** The Credentials and Elections Committee is recommending the appointment of 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.

There will still be a vacancy in the service/maintenance category.

Motion:	To accept the three appointments for Staff Congress members for 2014-2015 as brought forth by the Credentials and Elections Committee	
	Proposed: Rep. Hitchcock	Seconded: Rep. Sexton
Called for Vote:	Passed	

**Announcements:**

- Employee Appreciation Picnic – May 6, 2014, 10:45am-2:00pm, Allie Young Lawn
- Commencement – May 10, 2014, 10am & 2 pm
- Water & Steam Outage – May 16-22, 2014
- Summer Intersession – May 19-30, 2014
- Memorial Day – May 26, 2014 – MSU Closed
- Next Staff Congress Meeting – June 2, 2014, 1 pm, Riggle Room
- Staff Congress end of year luncheon – June 2, 2014, 11:30 am, location announced later
- Electric out in the Athletic Complex – week of May 12th

Motion:	To adjourn	
	Proposed: Rep. Hutchinson	Seconded: Rep. Kell
Called for Vote:	Passed	

Minutes submitted by: Rhonda Crisp, Secretary