

# Staff Congress: At-A-Glance

January 08, 2018

## Staff Salutes

### *First Salute: The Office of the President*

I was pleasantly surprised by the video greeting we received from the Office of the President. What a nice change than the printed cards we used to receive. It shows President Morgan is being fiscally responsible and taken a different path.

### *Second Salute: Staff Congress*

I just think the Staff Congress should be recognized for the great job they do in handling childish “concerns”. I’m sure there are a lot of “smh” (shaking my head) moments as the comments and concerns come through, so thank you all for handling them as professionally as possible.

### *Third Salute: Dr. Scott Niles*

We would like to salute Dr. Scott Niles for his many years of service to Morehead State University in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, as well as his numerous years of service on Staff Congress. Dr. Niles has served on the Executive Leadership Council as Parliamentarian, Vice-Chair, and is currently in his second term as Chair. Dr. Niles will be leaving university employment to pursue an opportunity at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia. We wish Dr. Niles much success in his new endeavor!

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 **Staff Salutes**
- 2 **Guest Speakers**
- 2 **Chair and Vice-Chair Reports**
- 3 **Committee Reports**
- 4 **Staff Issues**
- 5 **Campus Announcements**



## Guest: Dr. Suzanne Tallichet, Chair of Faculty Senate

Vice-Chair Purnell momentarily suspended the meeting agenda to invite Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Suzanne Tallichet, to introduce herself and give an update. Dr. Tallichet thanked Staff Congress for inviting her to attend and extended an open invitation to Faculty Senate meetings. Tallichet looked forward to working with Staff Congress on any issues and would be happy to create joint resolutions when appropriate. She wanted staff to know that they are appreciated and that faculty would not be able to serve students and the MSU community without them.

## Chair Report: Clarissa Purnell

In his absence, Vice-Chair Purnell reported that Chair Niles would be taking a job at the Georgia Institute of Technology and will be resigning as Chair, effective January 22, 2018. There will be a certificate of appreciation presented to Chair Niles, signed by his fellow congress members. The members of MSU Staff Congress wish him all the best as he starts this new chapter.

In accordance with Staff Congress By-Laws, Vice-Chair Purnell will move into the Chair seat, effective February 1, 2018, to finish the remainder of Niles's term, ending June 2018, and, at a special meeting on January 22, 2018, a new Vice-Chair will be elected to fulfill the remainder of the current Vice-Chair term. More information regarding these Executive Council seats was presented during the Credentials & Elections committee report.

## Vice-Chair Report: Clarissa Purnell

Vice-Chair Purnell announced the Staff Salutes.

## Guest Speaker: President J. Morgan

President Morgan thanked Vice-Chair Purnell for assuming the duties of Chair and expressed sadness that Dr. Niles will be moving on. He welcomed Staff Congress back from the holiday break and hoped everyone got lots of rest after a taxing semester, acknowledging that unfilled vacancies on campus means plenty of work for fewer employees. On the other hand, he said, having these vacancies work for our benefit at the moment, because the university will not receive approximately 1% of our quarterly-given state appropriation – effectively, a budget cut in our current fiscal year. This amounts to approximately \$416,000 but, due to conservative hiring practices, it will not cause any departments on campus to have to return money their current budgets to the general fund.

Morgan continued, more concerning than a current-year budget reduction is the coming fiscal year's budget predictions. Increases in pension costs may equal 3.1 million new dollars. Also, having been told to expect a double-digit budget reduction from the state, we may assume at least a 10% budget cut, possibly 4.1 million dollars. Loss in tuition from our Saudi Arabian and other student populations could equal another 1-2 million dollars. Increases in fixed costs are .5 million dollars and increases in the cost of healthcare is another 1.6 million dollars. All total, there are at least 10-12 million dollars that must be found before the new budget begins in July, unless the state government decided to go in a different direction. In Frankfort, there are many scenarios being discussed. Pension reform may change the numbers but Morgan expects to hear an astronomically high proposal for cuts from Governor Bevin's office – perhaps 20% cuts to government spending, and, then, for the General Assembly to push for a lower amount. Right now, the university administration is planning for 10% cuts from the state but is aware that this may change. Morgan encourages everyone to save spending where they can and pointed

out this is a state-wide concern at all universities.

Another topic President Morgan wanted to discuss with Staff Congress was Spring Break for staff. While shutting down campus for the entire week of Spring Break is not possible, he would like to offer one paid day off during Spring Break to each staff person as long as the office is open and staffed. Staff Congress is tasked with gathering feedback for the logistics of carrying out a plan of this kind.

President Morgan also wanted to address the topic of annual employee evaluations, particularly evaluations of professional and classified staff. He understands there may be difficulties with the online system, there may be a lack of consistency in how they are used, and a lack of participation in the process. There may be a need to return to pen and paper evaluations in some cases and there may be a need to have different evaluating procedures for professional and hourly employees. New committees with representatives from the appropriate employment classifications have been formed to discuss the issues surrounding the evaluation process. If Staff Congress representatives and MSU employees have questions or concerns regarding this topic, they should send those to Vice-Chair Purnell who will be Chair of Staff Congress, effective February 1, 2018.

Another new task force Morgan introduced was a Facilities Evaluation team. This group will evaluate each campus building for how efficiently that space is used. Morgan suggested that we have needs for building space of about 7,800 students, not including dual-credit students, but we have buildings enough for 10,000-12,000 students. The cost alone of heating and cooling our buildings is in the millions of dollars. If this committee finds it possible to further reduce our campus footprint, Morgan believes it would be to our advantage to do so.

### ***Benefits & Compensation: Committee Chair Craig Dennis***

\* **Committee Chair Dennis** expressed interest in hearing of any reports of health insurance issues in the transition from 2017 to the 2018 coverage year. He had constituents report they had not received their benefits card yet. Upon calling the Office of Human Resources, he instructed that anyone who had not received their benefits card yet should call the Health Equity company, which now holds our benefits balances instead of Flex Made Easy. The company is able to issue new cards upon request.

Representative Fletcher took the opportunity to ask Mr. Nally about having received two different benefits cards from Health Equity. Dr. Harr suggested that there are different cards for different benefits accounts. If users received more than one card, they should have more than one type of benefits account.

Dennis reminded Congress members to encourage their constituents to report any issues with health coverage to HR but, also, to their Staff Congress representatives.

Rep. Alan Rucker took the opportunity to praise the switch over to the new HealthEquity HSA plan. Director Nally reminded everyone to let HR know if they see any issues with the transfer from Flex Made Easy.

### ***Credentials & Elections:***

\* **Parliamentarian Pace** informed the Staff Congress that there will be a vacancy in the Vice-Chair seat as Clarissa Purnell fulfills the rest of Chair Niles's current term, ending June 2018. The resulting Vice-Chair vacancy will be filled after a special election takes place at the January 22, 2018 special meeting. Representative Pace called for Statements of Interest for the seat of Vice-Chair from Staff Congress members, to be sent to Representative LaFontaine by Friday, January 12, 2018.

As Chair Niles vacates his Area 4 representative seat, Krys Lynam will be replacing him on Staff Congress as a representative for this area for the remainder of this year's term.

An election for Staff Regent will occur this spring, along with the elections of new Staff Congress representatives. The Staff Regent has a three-year term. Information regarding these elections will be sent out in March by Parliamentary Pace.

Representative Gwen Sloas's vacated representative seat should be filled by February.

The University's Service Committee, which selects the recipients of the Distinguished Faculty Service and Distinguished Staff Service awards, hopes to fill four vacancies. Annette Hines and Shana Savard Hogge volunteered their service on this committee and two more Staff Congress members are needed to fill these vacancies.

### ***Sustainability Report:***

\* **Representative Ring** reported that the new Sustainability website is going live January 8, 2018 and to look forward to increased accessibility and functionality.

### ***Staff Issues: Committee Chair Louise Cooper***

\* **Committee Chair Cooper** reported several staff concerns that were submitted online.

#### **\*\*CONCERN (submitted 12/14/2017)\*\***

Might be a lot to ask once the students have left for the holiday break, but maybe IT could come up with a plan to actually answer the Help Desk phones when staff have something they need--instead of not answering them.

#### **RESPONSE (received from Rob Lacy)**

If you are referring to the Christmas Break, the phones were covered. If you are referring to something different, please let me know which holiday or break so I can pass that suggestion along to those that would make the decision.

Representative Cooper noted when she called the IT Help desk, she had no trouble getting help.

#### **\*\*CONCERN (submitted 12/12/2017)\*\***

The November Staff Congress newsletter included a concern regarding bringing Spring Break back for "ALL" staff; the response from Harold Nally was that he would leave the concern for Staff Congress to speak on. However, I saw no reference to discussion of this issue in the remainder of the Nov. newsletter; nor was it mentioned as a discussion item in the December newsletter. Does Staff Congress plan to address this concern?

#### **RESPONSE**

The issue was addressed by President Morgan during the January 8, 2018 meeting. Staff Congress had been awaiting discussion on this topic after asking about the possibility of regaining the Spring Break holiday at an earlier date.

Staff Congress representatives would like to take this opportunity to solicit feedback from constituents to forward to President Morgan regarding this discussion topic. If you see any issues/obstacles that would arise if this discussion topic were to go forward, please email those to your staff congress representatives.

## Other Reports

### ***Staff Regent Report: Dr. Shannon Harr***

**Staff Regent Harr** reported the Board of Regents held their regular meeting Thursday, December 7, 2017. At this meeting, they accepted the first quarter financial reports, as well as the biennial budget request. The Personnel Policy PG-64 for Tobacco Use was approved. They voted to dispose of real property and voted to approve to change the name of The College of Business and Technology to The Elmer R. Smith College of Business and Technology, which will be celebrated during Homecoming in Fall 2018. There will be a work session on February 22, 2018 at the Prestonsburg campus if the weather allows it. President Morgan added the Board of Regents hoped to use regional campus facilities for meetings at least once a year.

***Human Resources Report: Harold Nally, Director of Human Resources***

**Director Nally** announced Lora Pace would have a new additional role on campus as a Deputy Title IX coordinator and will be taking on student cases.

***Cabinet Report: Beth Patrick***

**VP Patrick** was not in attendance and there was no report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

No old business to report.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

No new business to report.

**CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Wednesday, January 10 – Convocation will be held in Button Auditorium at 11:00 a.m.
- Friday, January 12 – Winter Session grades are due in the Registrar’s Office.
- Monday, January 15 – University offices will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- Tuesday, January 16 – Spring 2018 semester classes begin.
- Monday, January 22 – There will be a special meeting of Staff Congress representatives with President Morgan about the university’s new strategic plan in Combs 413 at 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 23 – Last day to register for or change classes and the last day to withdraw with 100% creditable fees.
- Don’t forget to check [www.msueagles.com](http://www.msueagles.com) for upcoming MSU athletic events.
- Friday, March 16 – Applications for Upward Bound instructors, resident hall supervisors, and, resident advisors are due. <http://www.moreheadub.org/announcements/summerjobs2018>

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