

Staff Congress: At-A-Glance

February 4, 2019

Cabinet Updates: Dr. Bob Albert and President J. Morgan

Provost Albert addressed Staff Congress regarding the staff fractionalization process. Some staff have been selected in the last year to teach classes. These staff were picked based on expertise and talent. Allocating staff time to instruction helps in the performance funding model and helped fulfill the need for 55+ sections of FYS in the fall semester. The plan is to continue with the fractionalized staff model in the future.

Provost Albert understands the concerns brought forward about the equity of this process. There were some staff who taught that were compensated instead of fractionalized. In some cases, the numbers of sections taught exceeded the staff person's fractionalized load and those individuals were compensated. Some others who were compensated are part-time or grant-funded employees and could not be fractionalized. Outside of these circumstances, there were three staff people who were compensated instead of fractionalized in order to avoid eliminating those classes from the schedule. In the future, however, President Morgan and Provost Albert would like to avoid any inconsistencies in the fractionalized model.

Representative Fletcher asked how some staff could be considered to have a fractionalized work load, when they end up working 50 or 60 hours a week to teach and fulfill the requirements of their regular job. Provost Albert said that a number of staff members would argue that they are working more than 40 hours per week and they would need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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Cabinet Updates, Continued:

President Morgan addressed the group regarding a survey of benefits and compensation. Members of the University's Standing Committee on benefits as well as the Staff Congress and the Faculty Senate benefits committees are considering the elements of a questionnaire to be sent to benchmark and sister institutions.

Regent Dennis asked if Kentucky's budget situation created a unique situation or if there are other states to which we can compare ourselves to get an accurate measure of our benefits and compensation standards. President Morgan acknowledged Kentucky's "perfect storm" of performance funding demands, skyrocketing pension costs, and budget cuts. Other states experienced some of these things, but maybe not all at the same time. He indicated that it may still be useful to look at schools that are similar to MSU in states like Tennessee and Georgia. Jill Ratliff's staff are working on identifying institutions which are regional in scope, an hour or two outside of a metropolitan area, and have similar student populations.

Chair Report: Clarissa Purnell

Chair Purnell welcomed new representatives:

Risa Boyd,
Debbie Cooper, and
Becky Scott.

CPE President Aaron Thompson will be hosting a series of listening tours across Kentucky to engage students, community, business representative and educators about issues impacting college access, student success, workforce quality and transitions to career. The scheduled dates for MSU are May 14-15. We will provide further details of time/location when they are made available.

Vice-Chair Report: Lora Pace

Vice-Chair Pace reported the website is up to date and requested the new members of Staff Congress to let her know which committees they would like to serve on. Committee chairs should give updated committee rosters to Vice-Chair Pace.

One Staff Salute submission was made since the January 2019 meeting. A Staff Salute certificate was presented to Brenda DeHart.

Staff Salute:

***Brenda DeHart**– Brenda is one of those "go to" folks on campus when you need something done or need help finding your way to the right person. She works with students, staff and faculty and is always kind, courteous and supportive. She is the linchpin that helps keep RSP running smoothly. – submitted 1/8/2019*



Benefits & Compensation:

****Committee Chair Savard-Hogge*** reported discussion continues on a benefits survey. The committee met on January 9 and January 16 to discuss the University Standing Committee's review of employee benefits. Questions and comments from University staff about this work can be directed to members of the Staff Congress Benefits and Compensation committee.

Credentials & Elections:

****Committee Chair Lynam*** reported:

- Due to job reassignments and resignations, Becky Scott, Risa Boyd, and Becky Cooper replaced previous representatives David Litteral, Mica Collins, and Gabria Sexton.
- The committee met in January to discuss redistricting campus areas in preparation for this year's Staff Congress elections.
- The committee's next meeting will be February 20 in 901 Ginger Hall and all are welcome to attend.
- All vacancies on the University's Standing Committees have been filled except for one.

Sustainability Report:

****Representative Niehoff*** reported the following:

- February 3 – March 30: Recyclemania has begun!
- February 20: All are welcome to attend a Sustainability Workshop with Dr. Chris Barton, Professor of Forest Watershed Management, at the First Baptist Church, 123 E Main St from 5:30 p.m. -7:00 p.m.
- April 12: The Triplett Creek Pride Cleanup will be from 10am-3pm. Meet at Memorial Tree park picnic area for supplies.
- April 19: Earth Day Celebration will be on ADUC lawn 11:00 am – 4:00 pm.
- April 20: The Triplett Creek tree planting event will take place, with details to be announced.
- April 26: The Lockegee Pride Cleanup will be from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Meet at trailhead entrance for supplies.
- If employees have large amounts of paper to recycle, contact the facilities department and that material will be shredded and recycled.
- The University's Tree Care Plan is being reviewed and updated.

Staff Issues:

****Committee Chair Maxey*** reported the following staff concerns were submitted since the January 2019 meeting:

****CONCERN (submitted 1/9/2019)****

Thank you for the lunch after Convocation today. My concern is that "lunch" from Starbucks was a pastry and coffee. This obviously does not nor should it be considered a meal for lunch. It is a shame that the decision was made to allow Starbucks to participate with only these two items being available. It is situations like this that make morale even lower than it already is.

RESPONSE (from Bill Redwine 1/14/2019):

Thanks for the feedback. We utilized Starbucks only for the reason of having something from every location in ADUC expecting that some participants would not eat lunch but would rather welcome something like a drink and pastry. It was announced multiple times that if you didn't care for the choice that you received you were encouraged to trade around. Obviously that was not a good option and should we have an opportunity to provide a complimentary event like this, we will exclude Starbucks from the mix.

****CONCERN (submitted by 1/9/2018)****

Following Spring 2019 Convocation, staff were given an opportunity to explore the new food service options & setup in the renovated ADUC. Thank you for lunch. However, some of our colleagues weren't actually treated to lunch - some were treated to a coffee and danish (if they took the offer). In the grand scheme of things (esp in our current climate), this isn't a huge problem or a crisis. Yet because of the current climate & the low morale of staff across campus, it should be a concern. Nearly everyone is being asked to do more, often with or for less. Lunch was an opportunity to get more folks into the "new" ADUC, raise its profile, encourage traffic their way, & thank employees for their efforts so far this year. Anyone with a ticket to Starbucks was told lunch was not available - they could have a cup of coffee & a danish. When the concern was raised with Auxiliary Services director Bill Redwine, asked if he knew that was what Starbucks was offering, he replied curtly that yes, he did. If that is indeed the case, then Starbucks should not have been an option. His lack of foresight or customer service in his response to colleagues is a concern. The matter of offering a meal & what the meal consists of may be a small thing, but often it is the effort made with the small things that help the most.

RESPONSE:

See previous response from Bill Redwine.

****CONCERN (submitted 1/10/2019)****

Is there anything that could be done to improve the lighting in Button Auditorium? The audience is unable to see the speaker because it is so dismal. I understand that the lighting is low in order to attempt to see the information on the screen but the technique is unsuccessful. The result is that neither the speaker nor the information is visible. It is very frustrating. Could there not be spotlights installed? Could the speaker be placed on stage? Could the house lights be turned up until the screen presentation and then can the lights be turned low during the presentation?

RESPONSE (from Kim Oatman 1/14/2019):

This is a very good point and an important need. A lighting, lighting controls and audio improvement project is needed for Button but will be very costly. Funds are not currently available, but a request for funding will most likely be included in the next capital budget request.

****CONCERN (submitted 1/10/2019)****

While touring ADUC following Convocation it was noticed that there is no signage directing those with physical disabilities to ramps and elevators. The space is immense and there are many halls and stairs to negotiate. Is this being addressed?

RESPONSE (from Kim Oatman 1/14/2019):

There was a delay with the signage contract for the building. It will be addressed soon.

****CONCERN (submitted 1/10/2019)****

ADUC is a beautiful space that we can be proud of but there isn't any technology in most of the rooms. How are we to host meetings and conferences without the proper tools? Will this be rectified or are there other options?

RESPONSE (from Kim Oatman 1/14/2019):

MSU is working with the state to determine how much funding will be available for technology and to develop a priority plan for installing technology in ADUC rooms.

****CONCERN (submitted 1/18/2019)****

In the fall, the PG-55 Technology Resource Acceptable Use policy was updated. There are a lot of prohibited activities listed in the policy that are not easily understood by many employees and people may do without fully understanding the technical descriptions or wording in that policy. For example, what constitutes "Operating an unauthorized device or service including peer-to-peer hosts, radio frequency broadcast stations, streaming video servers, wireless access points, or other technology resource that may conflict with or impair the University's technology resources?" How in the world would we know what that translates to? Should we not listen to Pandora? Should we not access YouTube? People need examples, definitions, and to be educated on what this means. And it's not just this one activity... Can IT provide an FAQ or something that can be distributed to employees so that there is a better understanding?

RESPONSE (from Chris Howes 1/22/2019):

The guidelines for acceptable use of MSU information technology resources are reviewed and revised as necessary to establish and ensure adherence to best practice information technology policies and procedures; and to ensure compliance with state, federal, and local laws and regulations. Policy PG-55, Technology Resource Acceptable Use, was last updated on June 5, 2008. The MSU information technology environment has experienced significant change, including technology advancements, since the last revision. The Office of Information Technology will work to develop supporting documentation for PG-55, including examples of acceptable use. When complete, the supporting documentation will be available on the MSU OIT website. Should you have questions on technology use, require additional clarification, or have other suggestions, please contact our OIT Service Desk at 783- HELP (4357). Thank you for sharing this feedback.

Other Reports

Staff Regent Report:

**Staff Regent Dennis* reported the Board of Regents (BOR) met on Thursday December 6, 2018 for the 4th quarter meeting. During this meeting, the BOR:

1. Approved the minutes from the third quarter meeting of September 6, 2018.
2. Approved the fall 2018 graduates.
3. Ratified personnel actions: promotions, advance degree recipients, faculty and staff on leave, reassignments, separations -usually retirements -, and other changes from faculty to staff and vice-versa, title changes, interim appointments, etc. There was nothing out of the ordinary here except for two staff being paid to teach classes while there were others not listed. This has been addressed through Staff Congress and Dr. Morgan.
4. Accepted the audit report from Dean Dorton Allen Ford. This is a required annual audit. There were no budget amendments or equipment purchases greater than \$200,000.00 during the April period (April 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018).

5. Approved minor revisions to the BOR bylaws. These were minor revisions consisting of different wording and numbering.
6. Approved changes to PAC-2: Promotion to Professor. The changes were only to review process and makeup of the promotion committees.
7. Approved the Bachelor of Science – Space Systems Engineering. This moves the University towards having a true stand-alone engineering program at MSU.
8. Accepted the first quarter financial report and amended the operating budget. The first quarter ends June 30, 2019. There are two basic financial statements: a statement of net position and the statement of revenues, expenditures, changes in net position.
9. Approved revisions to PG-55 pertaining to acceptable use of technology resources. These changes were mostly updated wording and terms.
10. Approved the delegation of authority for Architect/Engineer selection to the MSU President. This was approved to save time in the selection process by the BOR or the state in the event MSU needed a small job/project completed.
11. Heard the fall 2018 enrollment report from President Morgan, which shows a total headcount of 10,200. Numbers of freshmen were up while upper classmen and graduate student numbers were down. Retention looks good at 73.7% with URM retention at 78%.
12. Reviewed the one personal service contract between August 23, 2018 and November 15, 2018, which was for more than \$10,000.00 and was for legal representation for immigration questions and issues.
13. Reviewed a report on health insurance and benefits for 2019. MSU will remain with Anthem, be self-funded, offer the same three plan choices, maintain the wellness incentives, stay with Health Equity for HSA/HRA/FSA, continue our partnership with KYRx Coalition for prescription drugs, and no changes to the life insurance. Changes include: the tobacco surcharge will increase from \$100 to \$200 per month, the spousal surcharge will increase from \$100 to \$150 per month, and dental benefits are offered on a voluntary basis and paid by the employee. An RFP to find if MSU should go to fully insured by an outside firm showed a huge increase in cost and was not approved. For more in-depth information visit the BOR [web page](#).

Faculty Senate Report:

****Dr. Sue Tallichet*** reported the Faculty Senate will meet on February 7 for a second reading of their revised constitution and bylaws. Gen Ed revisions are nearing completion. Faculty Senate work on a review of benefits will continue.

Human Resources Report: Harold Nally, Director of Human Resources

****Harold Nally*** shared the following announcements:

- 70 employees have signed up for the e-learning staff development portal. Contact Paula Black or Michelle Hardin with questions.
- 12 employees enrolled in the Freedom from Smoking class.
- W-2s and 1095C tax forms were mailed out, but it is not too late to sign up for electronic delivery of those forms. There is a 50/50 split between those employees who received them electronically versus in the mail.
- The University's Standing Committee on benefits met January 16. The healthcare task force met with the group to provide information and answer questions about the work they completed.

- Other updates on this committee’s work were provided by Committee Chair Savard-Hogge who is working with the University Standing Committee and members of the Faculty Senate’s benefits committee to discuss a review of employee benefits.

Cabinet Report:

In addition to Dr. Albert’s and Dr. Morgan’s earlier updates, Chair Purnell shared information sent from CIO Chris Howes: the Office of Information Technology is working on follow-up documentation to support understanding of PG-55, the Technology Resource Acceptable Use policy. When it is complete, that documentation will be distributed to employees appropriately.

OLD BUSINESS:

Changes to Staff Congress’s bylaws and constitution are scheduled to be reviewed by the Board of Regents at their March 2019 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Wednesday, February 6: The Black History Month Film & Discussion Series will be viewing Chadwick Boseman’s *Marshall* in Breckenridge Hall Rm 002 from 6:30 pm – 8:45 pm.
- Thursday, February 7: For National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, there will be a mobile outreach vehicle providing HIV and Hepatitis C testing on campus free of charge.
- Tuesday, February 19: Camden-Carroll Library and the Eagle Diversity Education Center will host the Annual African-American Read-In from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm on the first floor of the library.
- Tuesday, February 19: The Black History Month Film & Discussion Series will be viewing *The Green Book* in Breckenridge Hall Rm 202 from 6:30 pm – 8:45 pm.
- Monday, March 4: The next Staff Congress meeting will be in ADUC 326 at 1:00 p.m.
- MSU Men's Basketball will play Austin Peay on Saturday, February 16 and Murray State University on February 28.
- Don’t forget to check www.msueagles.com for other upcoming MSU athletic events.

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