

Staff Congress: At-A-Glance

June 3, 2019

UPDATE: President Morgan

Dr. Morgan:

- Thanked the outgoing Executive Council and representatives of Staff Congress for their good work in the last year.
- Asked employees to let Kim Oatman's team know if any summer camps or events may be effected by the various facilities projects going on, including pressure washing, restriping on the streets, and clean-up.
- Announced that all unrestricted employees on the payroll for at least the last full year will receive a one-time \$400 supplement. After an evaluation of university finances, it was determined the budget was stable enough to extend the extra compensation, particularly keeping in mind lower-level employees. The cost to the university will be roughly \$400,000. Employees in restricted, grant-funded, and soft-funded pay categories should be referred to their AVP.

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Chair Report: Clarissa Purnell

Chair Purnell reported:

- President Morgan put together an Ad Hoc committee to look at signage across campus and asked for a staff appointment to that committee. Toni Hobbs was asked and accepted the appointment.
- Another Ad Hoc committee was assembled to review PGs. Chair Purnell and Vice-Chair Pace have been serving as staff representatives during the review process. Tim Hare, Katy Carlson, Harold Nally, Karen Napier, President Morgan, and Jill Ratliff have also all been a part of the review. No substantive changes have been made to PGs. The initial review is part of the SACSCOC accreditation process and only minor updates in titles, offices, and grammar have been made. The Board of Regents will be presented with any changes in mid-July and voted on in August. Policies being flagged for more substantive changes in content will be reviewed in the next cycle of the review. In the new business portion of this June meeting, Staff Congress will vote to approve any minor updates.

Staff Congress Officer Elections

Staff Congress representatives voted for their new Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer.

Shana Savard-Hogge was elected by acclamation to the office of Chair of Staff Congress for the 2019-2020 term.

Laura Rucker was elected to the office of Vice-Chair after a vote between her and Amanda Holbrook.

Andrea Stone was elected by acclamation to the office of Secretary/Treasurer.

Vice-Chair Report: Lora Pace

Vice-Chair Pace reported the following Staff Salute submission was made since the May 2019 meeting. A Staff Salute certificate was presented to Rhonda Ferguson.

Staff Salutes:

Rhonda Hutchinson Ferguson - “*Rhonda is one of the most organized and helpful staff members we are blessed to work with. She manages a workload for at least two people, and somehow gets her work done correctly and with kindness. – submitted 5/17/2019*



Rhonda Ferguson, Administrative Assistant to Director, Athletics

Chair Purnell was presented with a decorative gavel plaque to commend her for her hard work as Chair of Staff Congress. Chair Purnell and Vice-Chair Pace were also presented with certificates of appreciation for their work on Staff Congress. Other members rolling off include Tina McWain, Becky Scott, Alan Rucker, Krista Utterback, Sabra Lowe, and Richard Fletcher.



Benefits & Compensation:

****Committee Chair Savard-Hogge*** reported the Benefits and Compensation Committee of the Staff Congress met on May 29 to discuss a priority list for their process efficiency review. Staff can submit any feedback on the need for improvement.

1. Student Hiring
 - Create electronic hiring process that can determine federal aid eligibility.
 - Include approval workflows and tracking for students.
 - Allow for electronic submission of supporting documentation, electronic signatures, and routing.
2. Forms
 - Establish a centralized depository for ALL university forms.
 - Ensure forms are writeable, updated, and able to be printed and/or saved.
 - Include contact information to answer questions or provide FAQs.
 - Include approval workflows and tracking.
3. Job Descriptions
 - Ensure all job descriptions are up to date.
 - Ensure job title aligns with job description.
 - Ensure supervisor understanding of roles and responsibilities.
4. Calendar of Events
 - Establish a centralized Calendar of Events.
 - Allow for filtering by type (staff, student, faculty, athletics, etc.)
 - Allow for coordination with community events.

Credentials & Elections:

****Committee Chair Lynam*** welcomed new representatives, whose terms begin July 1. New members chose Staff Congress committees on which to serve for the 2019-2020 year.

Benefits & Compensation Committee: Amanda Holbrook (Chair), Debbie Ellis (Vice-Chair), Benji Bryant, Dave Flora, Joe Fraley, John Mahaney, Laura Rucker, Shana Savard-Hogge, Xavier Scott, and Andrea Stone.

Credentials & Elections Committee: Krys Lynam (Chair), Sherry Surmont (Vice-Chair), Risa Boyd, Jarred Hunt, Kerry Murphy, Helisha Tuerk, and Traci Webster.

Staff Concerns: Susan Maxey (Chair), Joe Hunsucker (Vice-Chair), Samantha Bryant, Jamey Carver, Debbie Cooper, Sharon Cooper, Rhonda Ferguson, Jessica Harris, Gardener May, Holly Niehoff, and Jessica Thompson.

Goals for the Credentials & Elections committee include creating updated and reorganized constituency lists for each representative, to continue to clarify the Bylaws and Constitution of Staff Congress, and to appoint members to any University Standing Committees that need new members.

Sustainability Report:

****Representative Niehoff*** had nothing new to report.

Staff Issues:

****Committee Chair Maxey*** reported their group is sharing all staff concerns that were submitted. The following staff concerns were submitted and received responses since the May 2019 meeting:

****CONCERN (submitted 4/16/2019)****

Once again, the safety and security of our University has been called into question. Although there have been some moves in the right direction, our Police Department has still been grossly under staffed, specifically in the dispatch center.

There are currently three full time, certified dispatchers, one slated to go to the academy and one part timer, who has another full time job...this is for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are forced to work EXHAUSTING hours of overtime just to ensure that there is coverage. The president has denied the hiring, yet again, of another full time dispatcher to ease the load.

I don't know if he just doesn't comprehend the danger he is putting not only his Police Officers in, but also the community as a whole. There is no way these shifts and this strain can continue to happen and the staff that is already employed be expected to exhaust themselves. Something MUST BE DONE.

RESPONSE (from Russ Mast, Vice President Student Affairs):

The MSU police department is approved for four full-time dispatch positions, along with approval to hire part-time dispatchers to assist in coverage. There is a total of 168 hours of coverage needed to staff Police Dispatch on a 24 hour, seven days per week schedule. With four full-time dispatch employees at 40 hours per week, that provides the police department with 160 hours of coverage. The part-time employees hired for dispatch should be able to cover the remaining 8 hours of the week, along with any sick or annual leave time incurred by the four full-time dispatchers.

****CONCERN (submitted by 5/16/2018)****

How is it fair that Enrollment Services gets supplemental pay for a position lost, but other departments aren't? We have picked up just as much work.

RESPONSE (from Harold Nally, Human Resources):

This is a personnel matter that human resources will not respond to.

****CONCERN (submitted 5/16/2019)****

Why is an Academic Dept. Specialist position now requiring a Bachelor's degree??

RESPONSE (from Harold Nally, Human Resources):

The responsibilities set forth in the position description justified requiring a Bachelor's degree.

Discussion:

Rep. Lynam pointed out that new job postings now require bachelor's degrees, but not existing positions. She did not necessarily feel the job duties were different. Harold Nally indicated that new job duties had been added.

****CONCERN (submitted 5/17/2019)****

I see, yet again, the safety of our campus community is being ignored by the administration. Reference the May 2019 Staff Congress Newsletter. A member of the MSU community voiced a real and valid concern, yet the administration did not even bother to respond.

Running a 24/7 department with four full time dispatchers, one of which is not even fully trained yet, is a disaster waiting to happen. The fact that the administration either does not comprehend this, or simply does not care should be a real concern for not only the Police Department, but all faculty, staff, students and their families. Being severely understaffed and working a ridiculous amount of hours leads to mistakes, as studies show.

I personally do not want our dispatch center to be so over worked that they make a mistake and someone gets hurt. By not answering the concern of an MSU community member, the administration has only proven

that the safety of our faculty, staff and students is, in fact, not a top priority, as they continuously like to boast.

RESPONSE (from Russ Mast, Vice President Student Affairs):

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****CONCERN (submitted 5/17/2019)****

I was surprised to see that staff concerns essentially will no longer be anonymous. I understand that a few concerns that have come through have been more of a complaint, however, by asking staff to contact their staff representative if they feel their staff concern should be published when it wasn't, no longer makes that staff concern anonymous.

In addition, you are censoring the voices of the staff. It makes me wonder if this anonymous concern will make it into the newsletter because you don't like that I criticized your policy.

RESPONSE (from Staff Concerns Committee):

Staff Concerns are still anonymous as long as they are a concern that effects University staff and not individuals, does not slander, or is unprofessional. The form was designed to facilitate two-way communication between staff and University leadership with respect to institutional issues. If you do not feel comfortable placing a work order when your concern is about facilities problems, IT issues or parking then you can contact your representative for assistance. We are proud of the hard work of this committee. Many issues have been addressed and corrected.

****CONCERN (submitted 5/20/2019)****

I previously asked a question about staff evaluating chairs and deans. Human Resources responded that MSU's Performance Management System does not have the capability of allowing employees to evaluate supervisors. However, faculty receive an online survey in order to evaluate chairs. If faculty receive this survey, why are staff within the unit not included?

RESPONSE (from Harold Nally, during meeting):

Nally will meet with the Provost to get an answer.

Other Reports

Staff Regent Report:

****Staff Regent Dennis*** reported the MSU Board of Regents (BOR) will meet Thursday, June 6 in ADUC 329 at 9:00 a.m. It is a public meeting.

Faculty Senate Report:

****Dr. Sue Tallichet*** reported the faculty senate were continuing to meet throughout the summer to work on PAc clean-up.

Human Resources Report:

* **Harold Nally** reported the second wellness campaign for the year began June 1. The rewards from the first campaign should be deposited in employee accounts July 1. Two representatives reported their posted activity had disappeared from their online wellness accounts. Nally asked any staff experiencing this issue to report it to Human Resources.

Cabinet Report:

***Dr. Caroline Atkins** had nothing new to report.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Representatives voted to approve the preliminary clean-up revisions to PGs presented. Any changes made at the following Ad Hoc committee meeting will be voted on at the July Staff Congress meeting.

CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Wednesday, June 5 – Friday, June 7: SOAR visitors will be on campus.
- Monday, June 10: Summer 2019 and Summer I Session classes begin.
- Monday, July 1: The next Staff Congress meeting will be at 1:00 p.m. in ADUC 329.
- Thursday, July 4: MSU will close in observance of Independence Day. Employees will get a floating holiday on Friday, July 5.
- Friday, July 5: Summer I Session classes end.
- Monday, July 8: Summer II Session classes begin.
- Don't forget to check www.msueagles.com for other upcoming MSU athletic events.

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