

Staff Congress: At-A-Glance

October 7, 2019

Chair Report:

Vice-Chair Rucker read the following report from Chair Savard-Hogge:

- Constituency group met with President Morgan to discuss business operation improvements, process efficiencies, business manager model, and MSUPD staffing.
- Met with Staff Congress Benefits & Compensation Committee.
- Met with Faculty Chair Lesia Lennex and Vice Chair Dirk Grupe to discuss process efficiency work and First Year Seminar.
- Met with Faculty Senate Executive Council to discuss delegation of process efficiency tasks and align schedules with Staff Congress Chair, Vice-Chair, and Benefits and Compensation Committee.
- Met with Staff Congress Executive Council to discuss Staff Concern issues, SharePoint use in Staff Congress, and update Parliamentarian Garrick Ratliff.

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- Met with Dr. Morgan to discuss process efficiency work. Dr. Morgan has asked Russ Mast to convene a workgroup to review the university's student hiring and employment process. The first meeting will be Tuesday, October 15th. Representative Scott and Chair Savard-Hogge will represent Staff Congress.
- The University Employee Benefits Standing Committee met. Discussion included how premium amounts were determined, surcharge amounts, and treatment of health insurance budget allocation per full-time employee.
- The CPE listening tour was September 26th. Dr. Aaron Thompson held a forum designed to help CPE review the Commonwealth's higher education system.
- Met with Staff Regent Dennis to discuss information and perspectives on the University Employee Benefits Committee.
- Met with MSUPD leadership to stay updated on changes.
- Attended Faculty Senate meeting and discussed process efficiencies, healthcare, and supervisor evaluations.

Vice-Chair Report: Laura Rucker

The following Staff Salute submission was made since the September 2019 meeting. A Staff Salute certificate was presented to Dr. Susan Maxey.

Staff Salute:

Susan Maxey – *“We (the staff of the Graduate School) are writing this letter to nominate Dr. Susan Maxey for the Staff Salute award. She is a fabulous supervisor, a huge asset to our department and is so deserving of this award and recognition. Below are a few reasons why she is worthy.*

Leadership/Initiative: Dr. Maxey is the Director of the Graduate School and the Graduate Certification Officer. She is directly responsible for managing the activities related to graduate school education and programs. Over the many years of her service and experience, she has expanded the number of graduate programs available, worked to make many of the programs online, and created the first ever model for the Graduate School Advising Center.

Customer Service: Dr. Maxey is focused on providing the best customer service to graduate students. She has implemented Early Alerts for graduate students, which is an early intervention process that has greatly aided in improving retention. Under Dr. Maxey’s supervision, the Early Grad School program was created to offer MSU undergraduate students an opportunity to get a jump start on graduate school.

Teamwork: Despite the overwhelming amount of work that everyone has to do, Dr. Maxey consistently finds ways to help her staff. She makes time for assessment and feedback so that her staff are always equipped with the knowledge and tools to carry out their jobs. Her willingness to assist her staff and others demonstrates her commitment to the overall success of the Graduate School.

It is with great pleasure that we, Michelle Emrick, Gera Jones and Ollie Floyd respectfully submit this nomination for Dr. Susan Maxey to be recognized with a Staff Salute. Sincerely, Michelle Emrick, Gera Jones, Ollie Floyd” – submitted 9/23/2019



Dr. Susan Maxey, Director Graduate Programs/Certification Officer

Benefits & Compensation:

****Committee Chair Holbrook*** met on September 13th and discussed:

- KERS rate increase and the number of employees that could be affected.
- New FLSA threshold for exempt vs non-exempt status.
- Follow-up with Harold Nally regarding exit survey data. Data for July through September was received and the information will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

Committee Chair Holbrook, with Chair Savard-Hogge, met with the University Benefits Standing Committee on September 25th and reports the following:

- Tentative dates for Open Enrollment and the Benefits Fair were given.
- A handout showing health insurance rates under a 3-tier and a 4-tier model was distributed. HR noted that the 4-tier rate structure is more reflective of claim costs. HR noted that the premium costs for 2020 were set prior to the meeting.
- Question was asked regarding how rates are determined/what is the philosophy that drives it? There was not a clear answer given on philosophy but outside consultants and market data are used in determining the rates.
- Questions were asked regarding surcharge calculations and it was noted MSU's surcharges are much higher than other universities in Kentucky. Other state institutions either do not impose a surcharge or it is less than \$60.
- Discussed how insurance is budgeted. The budget is calculated at a set amount per position. If an employee does not take the insurance, it is treated as a vacancy credit.
- Discussion on how the aggregate 78/22 split may not be applied equitably across all premium categories.
- Discussion on how MSU's premium costs compare to sister institutions in the state. It was noted that MSU offers no employee premium cost if both spouses work for MSU.

Credentials & Elections:

****Representative Surmont*** reported:

- All vacancies have been filled.
- New employees have been added to the constituency lists and the revised lists have been distributed. The Committee will request updated FTE lists from HR each quarter and revise constituency lists accordingly.
- The Committee is reviewing bylaws for changes.
- The next Credentials and Elections meeting will be October 23rd.

Staff Issues:

****Committee Chair Maxey*** reported the following concerns:

****CONCERN submitted 9/11/19**

I am concerned about the safety of trees on campus. Many of the trees have dead limbs and I am afraid they might fall on someone if they are not trimmed back. The large trees around Allie Young, Ginger and the parking lot up on the hill need attention. I saw where a tree fell and damaged several students cars a few weeks ago in the parking lot on the hill behind the library. When will we have someone trim the trees around campus and remove the dead ones?

The brick walkway between Lappin and Combs that was recently painted black is very slick when it rains. The black paint is already starting to peel off and there are blue paint chips littering the grounds all around the area and getting into the drains. It looks really bad. Are there any plans to fix this and clean up the surrounding environment?

RESPONSE from Kim Oatman, Assistant Vice President Facilities & Operations

FM has had a contract tree trimming service on campus the past 2-3 weeks, but they are only working on weekends so that there are fewer students and parked cars to work around. Some of the tree trimming items noted in the concern have been addressed and the others are on the list to be taken care of in the coming weeks. The blue chips have been coming up since the street was painted blue several years ago. While FM was doing the pavement sealcoating this summer the decision was made to sealcoat the blue walkway too. This was a low cost solution and worth a try to see how it would work. It will continue to be monitored until next summer and re-evaluated. Other solutions such as re-paving or sandblasting will be very costly solutions. The black coating is not paint, it is the standard sealcoating with a sand admixture that has been put on the campus streets and parking lots, so it should not be any more slick than the other surfaces.

****CONCERN submitted 9/12/19**

It was reported by an attendee that in the July Staff Congress meeting a concern was read about the Housing Office's conference room costing \$100,000. The attendee said there was no discussion and no explanation. The newsletter stated that all concerns were addressed. How can you claim the concerns were addressed when you didn't solicit or give a response about the expense? How can you say concerns were addressed when you know they were not? Where is the transparency in this process? Staff Congress no longer represents STAFF.

RESPONSE from Max Ammons, Assistant Vice President/Dean of Students

No appropriated or operating funds were used for this project. The project cost was approximately \$53,000. The renovation was the final phase of a multi-year renovation that is funded by behavior-based fees that are not part of the university's tuition, fees, state appropriation, or revenue requirement. Given the office's high volume of customer traffic (students, prospective students, and parents), the design was intentional and welcoming, and tightly managed to maximize the limited, alternative resources that were available. A multi-year renovation approach was used due to the absence of any university-funded renovation and the necessity to find alternative ways to change what was previously the food services & dining room in the basement of Alumni Towers into the Housing office area over time. In short, the renovation transformed an open space dining facility to a client-centered office at little to no expense to the university.

Other Reports

Staff Regent Report:

**Staff Regent Dennis* reported the MSU Board of Regents will hold a work session on Friday, October 18th. The next MSU Board of Regents meeting will be Thursday, December 15th.

Faculty Senate Report:

**Faculty Senate Communications Officer Dearden* complimented the collaboration between Faculty Senate and Staff Congress. Faculty Senate is committed to process efficiencies and work has been distributed to the Faculty Senate Committees. Work continues on supervisor evaluations. The next meeting of Faculty Senate will be October 12th at 3:45pm in ADUC 326. Faculty Senate Communications Officer Dearden will send the Faculty Senate Communications Report to Staff Congress Executive Officers for

distribution to Staff Congress Representatives. Currently, Faculty Senate committees are looking at General Education reforms and First Year Seminar evaluations. It was also reported CPE awarded a grant of three million dollars to Gray Associates for program review of universities. By January a scorecard will be issued for every program. There is concern with the Duplication of Programs metric and what it means.

***Faculty Regent Adams** discussed the First Year Seminar modifications. They are currently reviewing the concerns from those with fractionalized workloads and looking at how to improve the course while also easing staff teaching concerns.

Human Resources Report: Harold Nally, Director of Human Resources

* **Director Nally** reported the following:

- Open Enrollment will be October 21st through November 8th. The Benefits Guide will be released within the next week.
- Three Open Enrollment informational sessions will be held:

Tuesday	October 22	10:30	ADUC 301
Wednesday	October 30	9:30	ADUC 310
Tuesday	November 5	9:00	ADUC 301
- Open Enrollment Labs will be held to assist with benefits enrollment. No appointment is necessary.

Monday	October 28	8:30-10:00	213 Ginger
Monday	November 4	3:00-4:30	213 Ginger
Thursday	November 7	9:00-11:00	213 Ginger
- The Benefits Fair will be October 24th from 9:00 – 12:00 in the ADUC Ballroom. Flu shots will be available.
- Health insurance has moved to a 4-tier system: Single, Employee + Spouse, Employee + Child(ren), and Family.
- Deductibles will remain the same except for the Lifelong Savings Plan. The split for health insurance premiums will be 78/22 for 2020.
- The original FLSA threshold was set to increase each year. The new version has a fixed threshold of \$35,568. This will affect those in the 550 grade.
- Asked to meet with Benefits and Compensation Committee to review Personnel Policies. Changes would be submitted for approval at the November Staff Congress meeting and the December Board of Regents meeting.

Representative Hunsucker asked if the clinic would offer flu shots. Representative Scott stated they are available starting in October, per the clinic's webpage.

Vice-Chair Rucker asked how FLSA information would be distributed. Director Nally responded that information sessions will be held.

Representative Maxey asked if the FLSA threshold changes would affect retirement. Director Nally stated HR will look at duties, salary, and retirement when recommending changes.

Cabinet Report:

* **President Morgan** reported on the change to the FLSA threshold from the U.S. Department of Labor. The new threshold for exempt status is \$35,568 which is approximately \$200 higher than the next lowest grade. Currently, they are looking at who is affected and plan to outline, within the next two weeks, a proposed solution. The deadline for compliance is January 1, 2020.

President Morgan reported he is working with Staff Congress Executive Council and Faculty Senate to start process efficiencies. Vice President of Student Affairs Russ Mast will be head of the student hires evaluation committee of approximately 10 members. Suggestions for membership can be sent to VP Mast, Chair Savard-Hogge, or Faculty Regent Adams.

Other reported information:

- Estimated 1,300 new students for the 2019/2020 academic year.
- Expenses are currently on budget.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Monday, October 7 at 3:30pm – Implicit Bias w/ Dr. Bryant Marks – Button Auditorium
- October 10-11 – Fall Break (students)
- October 11 – Half Day Fall Break (employees)
- October 18-20 – Homecoming Weekend
- Monday, November 4 – Next Staff Congress Meeting in ADUC 310
- Don't forget to check www.msueagles.com for upcoming MSU athletic events.
- Chair massages are offered on Thursdays, August 22-September 12, and Wednesdays September 18-December 18. Sign up at <https://livewell.mycernerwellness.com>

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