

# Staff Congress: At-A-Glance

Meeting Date: March 2, 2020

## Chair Report:

Chair Savard-Hogge reported:

- Student Employment Process Efficiency update:
  - Student Employment Ad Hoc Committee has not met since the February report.
  - The committee is working to draft four or five general student employment job descriptions to be used going forward. The job descriptions will allow for wage ranges and progressive job responsibilities.
  - Should be completed in early March.
  - Currently, the committee is waiting to receive a draft of the job descriptions.
  - Moving forward, after job descriptions are finalized, the committee will reach out to areas involved in the student employment process.
  - Another Ad Hoc Committee is working with IT to evaluate the process.
  
- Forms/Calendar Process Efficiency update:
  - COMA is working with Staff Congress to track issues with Quicklinks on the MSU website. Staff Congress will send out a survey to help resolve the issues. The survey will be distributed to Staff Congress Representatives who should then share it with their constituents.
  - Continue sharing the links to submit information for the campus community:
    - Calendar Link: <https://events.moreheadstate.edu>
    - News Link: <https://www.moreheadstate.edu/news>
    - Submit News/Events: <https://www.moreheadstate.edu/News/Share-Your-MSU-News/News-Form>

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- Reminded Representatives to look at their constituency lists and reach out to them periodically to create a line of communication.
- As reported in February, met with President Morgan in mid-January to discuss goals for the upcoming semester, including Staff Congress Benefits and Compensation Committee work, potential for staff increases, and time off at Spring Break. President Morgan sent notification that all staff will be provided one full day off during Spring Break.
- Executive Council met with President Morgan.
  - Spring Enrollment numbers look steady.
  - We will continue to work with President Morgan to determine if there will be increases in staff pay and what the increase would look like, if funds are available.
  - Discussed the Recreation and Wellness Center fee being charged to MSU employees. During the discussion, Staff Congress Executive Council clarified that we were only asking for MSU employees to have considerations made regarding the fee and not dependents or others using the tuition waiver. President Morgan is considering options and will bring ideas to the next meeting with Executive Council.
  - FLSA transitions are complete, but no information was available regarding movements or funding. Staff Congress Benefits and Compensation Committee will follow up with Human Resources.
  - Chair Savard-Hogge presented information regarding supervisor evaluations from benchmark institutions. President Morgan agreed to consider supervisor evaluations. Staff Congress Executive Council created an ad hoc committee to explore types of supervisor evaluations for consideration. The committee will meet on March 10.
- The ad hoc committee for Hybrid Evaluations met to determine the number of hybrid staff on campus. The committee will begin identifying evaluation instruments that are currently being used. Next steps will be reported when available.
- The University Benefits Standing Committee will meet March 4 to discuss healthcare and compensation.
- Submit nominations for the Faculty and Staff Distinguished Service Award by March 27.

## Vice-Chair Report: Laura Rucker

*The following Staff Salute submissions were made since the February 2020 meeting. Staff Salute certificates were presented to Hunter Chandler, Stacy Scott, Tina Stevens, and Greg Wilcox.*

### ***Staff Salute:***

***Hunter Chandler*** – “He has been making many amazing improvements in the tutoring and learning center that will help to improve the retention rates for all of campus. After stepping into a position that had been vacant for more than a year, he was able to pick it up and run with it.” – Submitted February 6, 2020

***Stacy Scott*** – “Stacy is always quick and efficient in communication and always goes above and beyond to assist library patrons.” – Submitted February 3, 2020

***Tina Stevens*** – “Tina consistently goes above and beyond to help students, staff, and faculty with whom she interacts. She does so with friendly manner and positive demeanor.” – Submitted February 27, 2020

***Greg Wilcox*** – “Greg is always friendly and eager to help. He is a great asset to the university.” – Submitted February 28, 2020

Vice Chair Rucker reported that she continues to serve on the ad hoc committee for hybrid evaluations and will serve on the ad hoc committee for supervisor evaluations.



***Greg Wilcox, Administrative Assistant to Dean, Education***



***Hunter Chandler, Coordinator Tutoring Services/Instructor***



*Tina Stevens, Retention Specialist and Academic Coordinator*

***Benefits & Compensation:***

\**Committee Vice Chair Ellis* reported the following:

- The committee is still reviewing questions for a potential staff survey. Upon conclusion of the review by the committee, a draft will be sent to all Staff Congress representatives for review and suggestions for edits.

Chair Savard-Hogge reported that she spoke to other Kentucky universities regarding their staff surveys and sample questions. She also spoke to Institutional Research for recent relevant surveys. The Benefits and Compensation committee is working on getting administrative approval.

***Credentials & Elections:***

\**Committee Chair Surmont* reported the following:

- All vacancies have been filled:
  - Gary Cornett – Area 3
  - Sharnetta Fritz – Area 1
- 2020 Election Year has 19 open seats – 8 seats for one-year term, 1 seat for two-year term, and 10 seats for three-year term. Staggered terms are a reflection of the Staff Congress Bylaws Section 4 which states “Terms shall be staggered so that one-third of the Staff Congress Representatives are elected annually”.
  - Area openings are:

	1 YR Term	2 YR Term	3 YR Term	Total
Area 1	2		2	4
Area 2	1		2	3
Area 3	2		2	4
Area 4	2		2	4
Area 5	1	1	2	4
<b>Total</b>	8	1	10	<b>19</b>

- A mass email is scheduled to go out to all staff for a call for nominations. The nomination and election timeline for Spring Elections is:
  - March 9: Nomination forms distributed to staff
  - March 20: Deadline to submit nomination forms online
  - March 31: Sample ballot distributed by Credentials and Elections Committee
  - April 13-17: Staff Congress Elections

***Staff Issues:***

***\*Committee Chair Becky Scott*** reported the following concerns:

**\*\*CONCERN submitted 2/21/2020**

“Is the newsletter no longer be published? I think it is awful how you are taking away any line of communication that staff have at MSU. You are considering changing your constitution so you no longer have to report concerns? How is this helping staff? Staff issues are being lost in the shuffle of staff congress leaders trying to attend Faculty Senate and SGA meetings. Staff Congress is for STAFF. If you want to be like Faculty Senate, then maybe staff should get to vote on changes to the constitution that governs them as faculty do. If you want to work as one body, dissolve staff congress all together and have one ruling body for faculty and staff.”

**Response from Shana Savard-Hogge, Staff Congress Chair**

*“In order to create a stronger bond within the staff, to promote cooperation among the administration, faculty, students, and staff of Morehead State University, we, the staff of this University, do establish a representative body to be known as the Staff Congress. The Staff Congress is established as an advisory body reporting to the University's chief executive officer. Further, we pledge to administer faithfully the policies and objectives which best fulfill the needs, concerns, and interests of the University in achieving its educational goals.”* –Preamble of the Staff Congress Constitution

The newsletter is published monthly and will continue to be published. If you are not receiving it via email, please reach out to the IT help desk for assistance. Additionally, archived newsletters are available on Staff Congress’ website. No efforts are being made to change the Staff Congress Constitution so that we no longer have to report concerns.

The process to change the Staff Congress Constitution is a lengthy formal process that involves two readings, approval of two-thirds majority of the membership of Staff Congress, the President, and the Board of Regents. Again, no efforts are being made to change the Staff Congress Constitution so that we no longer have to report concerns.

The Staff Congress Constitution enshrines collaboration through shared governance and places an expectation that Staff Congress will collaborate with administration, faculty, students, and staff of Morehead State University. We will continue to promote cooperation among the administration, faculty, students, and staff by utilizing all avenues available, including Faculty Senate and SGA.

**\*\*CONCERN submitted 2/27/2020**

“I and others on campus feel let down by IT. They were afforded four positions, during a hiring freeze, to help with business offices in 2017. It is my understanding that although two left the university, they did get a new position recently. I know for myself and others I have spoken to we are getting no additional support from IT because of these positions.

Others and I would like to know what value these positions are bringing to the university's business departments? In addition, in such a budget crunch, are they worth the investment?"

**Response from Chris Howes, Chief Information Officer**

"Thank you for submitting this staff question. Through the normal course of business, the Office of Information Technology has experienced several changes since 2017, with staff retirements, departmental transfers, and other departures. During each staff change, the role is reevaluated to consider any needed adjustments. The goal is to maintain an OIT organization that provides exceptional service to our faculty, staff, and students, while also remaining relevant with accelerating changes in technology. I would welcome the chance to learn more and discuss how we can work together on opportunities for service improvement."

**\*\*CONCERN submitted 2/27/2020**

"It would be great if the concerns submitted were actually addressed and answered instead of an essay being submitted that talks about everything EXCEPT the concern. Maybe google what transparency means."

**Response from Shana Savard-Hogge, Staff Congress Chair**

Without a specific concern and response being included in your message, it is difficult to respond. I am assuming you are referencing the response I gave to the concern submitted 01/09/2020 as reported in the Staff Congress February Newsletter.

Here is the concern I responded to:

"I am very concerned that Staff Congress Leadership is not focusing on the priority issues of the staff at MSU. Institutional priorities such as SACS, QEP, Gen Ed are important, but not as important as Staff well-being, work-life balance, professional development, and overall staff morale. Staff Congress appears to be too involved in Faculty matters.

It has also been brought to light that there has been significant turnover of elected staff congress members. Why has there been no mention of this in the staff congress newsletters.

It has been stated that the SC Chair is spending significant amount of time talking with FS chair in her office. Several hours at a time."

The concern stated that "...Staff Congress is not focusing on the priority issues of the staff at MSU". I discussed in my response what we are focused on and how that relates to staff well-being, work-life balance, professional development, and overall staff morale.

I can't respond to "Staff Congress appears to be too involved in Faculty matters" because I do not know what you are determining to be faculty matters or how we are involved in them. If you are referencing "[i]nstitutional priorities such as SACS, QEP, Gen Ed..." we have not discussed them as a congress outside of staff workloads and process efficiencies.

"Significant turnover of elected staff congress members". I am not sure how you are qualifying this because Staff Congress has always had turnover and it is reported in the Credentials & Elections Committee Report in the Staff Congress Newsletter.

"SC Chair is spending significant amount of time talking with FS chair in her office. Several hours at a time". I report that I meet with the Faculty Senate Chair. We are constituency leaders that not only want to work together but who have been asked by Dr. Morgan to do so. Please refrain from implying that the people who are in my office at any given time are in here to work against the best interest of staff. I have an open door policy—always have, even before I became Chair of Staff Congress. I have practiced relationship

building my entire career at MSU and throughout my time on Staff Congress. It is unfortunate that is being used to try to discredit me or the work that Staff Congress is doing.

I hope this helps clarify the items that were not addressed and answered in my essay. I apologize for the length of my previous response but the depth and breadth of my words support the many, many items that Staff Congress is working to positively impact staff. Please feel free to contact me directly if you would like to build relationships going forward.

Committee Chair Becky Scott also reported the following:

- The Staff Concerns Committee is looking at ways to increase interactions with constituents. One idea is to have a presence at events such as the Employee Appreciation Picnic.
- The Staff Concerns Committee is currently discussing how to handle concerns that are “accusatory, inflammatory, or unprofessional” as stated on the Staff Concerns submittal form.

**Discussion followed:**

- Representative Carver stated that the purpose of Staff Concerns is to provide a forum for discussion of benefits, salary, etc., not to submit personal complaints about another employee or department. Representative Surmont asked if we could add a message to the submittal link that appears once the concern has been submitted which details the guidelines for what will be sent forward for response. Representative Becky Scott stated that the continued concerns regarding Staff Congress take away from other work Staff Congress could be doing because the Representatives attempt to give thorough responses. Chair Savard-Hogge stated that it does not help us build relationships if we continue to put through concerns that are inflammatory. Representative Boyd cautioned that it was a fine line for deciding what meets the “accusatory, inflammatory, or unprofessional” standard. The staff member submitting the concern might think it is okay. Representative Ellis recommended putting forth all concerns and, if edited for language or confidentiality, state that when reporting the response. Vice Chair Rucker asked the committee what their criteria would be. Representative Niehoff responded the committee should have discretion, and not a list of rules. Representative Carver pointed out another issue for the committee is that anyone can submit a concern even if they are not staff or an MSU employee.

**Chair Savard-Hogge noted that Staff Congress is not discussing a change to the Staff Congress Constitution or not continuing to be transparent. Staff Congress is discussing how review happens and how the criteria listed on the website is being considered. Chair Savard-Hogge put the discussion back to the committee and noted that Staff Congress is not currently changing or recommending any changes to how Staff Concerns are processed.**

*The following concerns were received after the March Staff Congress meeting, but are included here for relevance:*

**\*\*CONCERN submitted 3/11/2020**

“Isn't it prudent to close next week (spring break) due to the confirmed cases of coronavirus in Kentucky? We have one suspected case in Rowan County.”

**\*\*CONCERN submitted 3/10/2020**

“Given the health scare in Kentucky and beyond, please encourage the administration to close the campus during spring break.”

**Response from President Morgan**

“Hello, it would be tough to shut down during spring break. We still have core operations going, students in res halls over break, recruitment, student groups from high schools coming in, and repairs to do.

Over the break there are much less people here so crowds are less a factor. At this point, the recommendations are not to shut down, but rather limit the # of large groups.

We will likely have to get ready for online instruction, so it will be a busy week. Thanks”

## **Other Reports**

***Facilities Report:***

\**Kim Oatman, Assistant Vice President of Facilities and Operations*, gave a brief presentation on preventative measures for flu and coronavirus. Extra efforts are being made to clean and disinfect common areas. Facilities will purchase more wipes and distribute to a central location in each building. Signs about illness prevention will be posted in common areas. Representative Niehoff attended a community meeting with local officials. MSU is currently waiting, watching, and keeping common areas clean and sanitized.

***Sustainability Report:***

\**Representative Niehoff* reported two clean-ups will be held: April 24 at Triplett Creek and May 1 at Lockegee. She is working with the Student Government Association and Student Activities Council on Earth Day programming.

***Staff Regent Report:***

\**Staff Regent Dennis* reported the MSU Board of Regents held a work session on February 28. The Board:

- Approved the sale of the Procurement Building for \$1,700,000 to Rowan County.
- Approved changes to PG-6. These changes included updates to job titles and adding language regarding minors on campus.
- Approved a gift from an alumnus which will be announced in the next couple of weeks.
- Discussed enrollment. Spring 2020 undergraduate enrollment was solid and expected to remain steady for Fall 2020. Graduate enrollment numbers declined.
- Discussed the budget for fiscal year 2021. Proposed legislation for the Kentucky Retirement System is delaying the process. Different versions of the bill would either freeze the rate of KERS or increase the rate to between 80% and 167% - a \$700,000 to \$5,000,000 increase. We will know the final outcome by next month when the legislative session ends.

- Discussed debt reduction plan. Proceeds from the sale of the Procurement Building will be used to pay down debt. Payments balloon this year. President Morgan wants to level them off.
- The quarterly meeting will be held on March 26.

***Faculty Senate Report:***

\* ***Faculty Senate Liaison Dearden*** reported Faculty Senate continued to work on Process Efficiencies. This includes review and clean-up of PACs and UARs. David Long, Chair of Faculty Senate Evaluations Committee, is looking at Dean Evaluations and job descriptions. The Research and Grant Committee wants to bring in more grant money and is currently identifying barriers to obtaining grant money. Faculty Liaison Dearden stated that we are all in this together and Faculty Senate wants to work with Staff Congress.

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

\* ***Rachel Frizzell, Human Resources Generalist***, reported Annual Evaluations are coming up. An email will be sent from Human Resources with more information.

***Cabinet Report:***

\* ***No Report.***

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Reviewed changes to Policies replacing references to “Standing” classification to “Regular”. The change is to terminology only and aligns with industry standards. Representative Xavier Scott moved to approve. Representative Ellis seconded. The changes were accepted by Staff Congress.
- Chair Savard-Hogge noted Faculty Senate is working on a resolution related to UAR 137.02, specifically asking for changes in pay increases from “merit” to “Cost of Living Increases and merit”. Chair Savard-Hogge asked Staff Congress to consider if we would recommend changes to our Personnel Management UAR.
- Chair Savard-Hogge reported on concerns related to workload. The Benefits and Compensation committee has been asked to discuss and highlight areas with workload issues to bring forth to the new Vice President of Administration and Fiscal Services. Representative Niehoff asked that staffing levels be looked at from a safety perspective, specifically the police department and dispatch. It was noted that some areas have one person who can complete a task and if they are out, it cannot be processed. The Benefits and Compensation Committee was asked to identify these areas as well and look for opportunities to facilitate cross-training.

## **CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- March 1-6 – MSPR Spring Fundraiser and Membership Drive
- March 2 – Step Up MSU Challenge Begins – Check <https://livewell.mycernerwellness.com> for group walk schedule
- March 3-7 at 7:30pm – Hamlet – Lucille Caudill Little Theatre
- March 11 & 25 at 12:10 – Star Theater Relaxation Program
- Monday, April 6 – Next Staff Congress Meeting in ADUC 329
- Don't forget to check [www.msueagles.com](http://www.msueagles.com) for upcoming MSU athletic events.
- Chair massages are offered on Tuesdays through May 5. Sign up at <https://livewell.mycernerwellness.com>

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