

Staff Congress: At-A-Glance

June 6, 2016

Chair Report: Craig Dennis

Chair Dennis stated President Andrews covered most of the topics he had prepared to discuss in his address to Staff Congress (see below).

Vice-Chair Report: Scott Niles

Vice-Chair Niles stated he would update the portal with information on all the new members and the new Chair/Vice Chair/committee assignments before the July meeting.

Special Guest: President Wayne D. Andrews

President Andrews addressed Staff Congress prior to the June meeting, thanking members for their service and encouraging all faculty and staff to focus on student success. President Andrews also cautioned employees about getting on the gossip mill and repeating gossip that may be detrimental to faculty and staff morale without knowing actual facts. There are a lot of rumors circulating regarding MSU business practices and other issues that have no factual basis.

MSU enrollment representatives are reaching out to those students at St. Catherine's and have fielded around 30 inquiries to date, although we don't know how many of the inquiries will turn into enrollments this fall. President Andrews indicated construction projects are now back on schedule with the new residence hall move-in set for mid-September and the temporary dining facility will be ready for start of summer school. The new dining facility above the parking garage is set for completion fall of 2017. The Board of Education building is undergoing renovations and will become home to Student Life and Enrollment Services. The Hogge Building (which currently houses Enrollment Services) will be razed this summer. The President touched on how we are going to increase enrollment when the population of our service region is declining—we have to differentiate ourselves through our programs and entice students (including out-of-state students) to choose our school. President Andrews indicated he does not anticipate further staff reductions this year and everyone needs to continue to concentrate on helping our students.

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Committee Reports

Benefits & Compensation: Committee Chair Jerel Benton

* **Committee Chair Benton** reported he reached out to Harold Nally a couple of weeks ago regarding the employees who were laid off, but Harold was unable to respond at the time and indicated he would follow-up in a couple of weeks. Committee Chair Benton has not been contacted by Harold as of meeting time today.

Credentials & Elections: Committee Chair Lora Pace

* **Committee Chair Pace** announced the Officer Elections would take place during New Business. Only one person ran for each position. Committee Chair Pace also had an update on the past representative election. The areas will be revised during the next election cycle. The committee has reviewed the documents and there were a few problems. Area 1 has 7 people and Area 3 needs one more person. Area 1 will be left until the next election cycle to correct and if Amy Moore agrees to serve, she will be appointed to Area 3 since she received the second highest number of votes. If he agrees to serve, Jarred Hunt will be added as an Area 4 representative. At the July meeting, we will disperse the constituent lists to representatives. The constituent lists will be by area and each person in their area will receive 1/6 of the constituents on their list. Representatives are expected to contact their constituents and mail the newsletter and other announcements to their constituents regularly.

Staff Issues: Committee Chair Paige McDaniel

* **Committee Chair McDaniel** was unable to attend but submitted the following concerns:

CONCERN: A Morehead News article on 5/20/16 stated that MSU only laid off 21 employees instead of the 30 that was publicized on campus. While it is great that less people seemingly lost their jobs, how does this work given the president's email to campus on 5/5/16 that said even with 30 job losses, it still did not cover the full budget deficit? I think the campus would be interested to know how this math works. Thank you.

RESPONSE from Beth Patrick, Chief Financial Officer/VP for Admin & Fiscal Services: We are still eliminating the same positions or positions of equivalent value that was identified in the initial communication. The number of employees impacted by layoff reduced because of multiple reasons. We had some employees in positions identified for layoff turn in retirement or resignation noticed before being notified of layoff. Also, new vacancies created since the initial count provided the ability to reassign or switch position funding that prevented some employee layoffs. So, in short, the same value of personnel reductions is being implemented but more will be from vacancies or other part-time/other wage accounts so impacting fewer current employees than initially required.

CONCERN: So during the reduction of staff, Human Resources followed PG 58. I would like an explanation of the policy explaining how someone who lost their job could apply or "bump" and/or take the job of another employee in a different department. How does this resolve any budget issues?

RESPONSE (Michelle Hardin, Associate Director Recruitment & Employment, HR): Per your request, I'm following up to your request after the Staff Congress meeting today. Concerning the policy relating to reduction in force, there were two interpretations of our current policy. One was that layoffs would be conducted by seniority by job title within the unit and the other by seniority within the unit. The layoffs were originally determined by seniority by job title within a unit. Upon a read of the policy, one construed that the policy indicates layoffs should be determined by seniority within the unit, meaning that bumping employees with less seniority was a possibility. Because there were two interpretations, the policy was sent to external legal counsel for an opinion. It was determined that the policy does not require bumping. Therefore, bumping will not take place. In addition and although the policy does not require MSU to look outside a unit for placing laid-off employees whose positions have been eliminated, we have done this where vacancies are available and when laid-off employees qualify for positions (vacancies). I'm quite sure the policy made sense during development but when actually implementing such a strategy, lack of clarification can be detected. As you know, MSU has not had a layoff of this significance since I've been employed (27 years); therefore, the policy had not been tested. Now that we've been through the process, there are intentions to take a closer look at the policy to determine if revisions should be made relating to clarity. --If you have further questions, let me know. Michelle

CONCERN: I have a question regarding UAR 327.04 (Tuition waiver). The amended date on the UAR state November 2015. I don't remember this being brought to the attention of the staff. How does the process for changing and UAR such as this work? Who brings it before the BOR? Are the BOR the only people who have feedback on the changes and approval of the proposed changes? What is the process of notifying staff of changes to UARs? As I stated earlier, I don't recall any staff being notified of changes to this particular UAR. This will have a negative impact on employees who utilize the tuition waiver for dependents spouses and/or dependents as they can only utilize a total of 12 hours of the tuition waiver assistance. Thank you for your timely response to my inquiry.

RESPONSE (Michelle Hardin, Associate Director Recruitment & Employment, HR): I need to make a correction to my response at the Staff Congress meeting today. I was actually aware of the changes to UAR 327.04, but had forgotten them because there were no substantive amendments in terms of benefits. The changes adopted on November 19, 2015 were initially in response to the addition of Winter Term. The new term was added to help increase revenues at MSU and when this was indicated by administration, Teresa Lindgren began a re-draft of the UAR to include Winter Term. I worked on the form to ensure the term was added as well. While working on both these documents, a representative from Financial Aid (this office administers the program) suggested some clarification language too. In summary, the following amendments were made:

- The “Winter Term” was added to the form and regulation so an employee or dependent could request courses during this term.
- The language about an eligible dependent and age was clarified as it was awkwardly written in the prior version of the regulation. The application is the same as it always has been.
- Relating to deadline dates for tuition waiver forms, the following sentence was added. “Should any of these dates fall on a weekend or holiday, the form is due on the following workday.”
- A clarification sentence was added regarding the application of tuition waiver and scholarships. “Students receiving other tuition specific scholarships or awards may not receive the waiver.” Because tuition is the only item our tuition waiver benefit covers, this sentence emphasized that both cannot be applied. The scholarship for tuition is applied first. If the scholarship covers the whole tuition, then the tuition waiver is not applied. If the scholarship covers only a portion of the tuition, the tuition waiver covers the remainder of the tuition costs. However, if an employee or dependent has other types of scholarships, that are not limited to tuition, then the tuition waiver can be applied first and the other scholarships last. The scholarship can sometimes create a refund for a student but a tuition waiver will never result in a refund. Processing has never changed. The verbiage was clarified so there is no misunderstanding.
- Finally, the followed sentence was removed, “Employees enrolled under the provisions of this program are not entitled to utilize the regular services of the Caudill Health Clinic.” All students are eligible to utilize the clinic, including employees taking classes; therefore, the sentence was removed. And more recently (last couple of years), the clinic has opened services to all faculty and staff regardless of student status.

I hope this clarifies the questions concerning the changes to the regulation. If the regulation was not shared, I recall it was imminent to get the form and regulation revised so Winter Term would allow for tuition waiver processing. Possibly, because there were no changes to benefit levels (and only items clarified, added or removed that benefit employees and dependents), administration did not deem it necessary to be reviewed by the governing bodies. Communication of policies and regulations are conveyed down through the supervisory channels. There was a communication that indicated the deadline for registration and tuition waiver for winter term to the campus community. The communication was not framed in a way that indicated a regulation had been changed, again likely because there were no substantive changes. I will recommend to Harold that he speak with the VPs about communicating all changes to policies and regulations to the campus community in some type of mass communication form. He is also copied on this correspondence. If you have further questions, let me know.

NOTE: All submitted Staff Concerns may be seen in their entirety, along with the corresponding response, on the Staff Congress Portal site. Login to the Portal site, go to Employee Services, select Staff Congress, and then choose the Past Staff Concerns button. There will be a listing by month and year of the Staff Concerns from which you may choose to review.

Sustainability Committee

* **Representative Niehoff** reported 1,889 pounds of donations were collected during the residence hall move-out. The Community Recycling Center has hired a new manager that happens to be a recent MSU graduate.

Other Reports

Staff Regent Report: Shannon Harr

Staff Regent Harr was unable to attend, but submitted the following report: I apologize for my lack of participation lately in Staff Congress. Due to traveling and changing positions at MSU, it has been a busy couple of months. I plan to be present at the meeting in July. The following is a Board of Regents update. The BOR met on May 13 for a regularly scheduled work session. No action was taken on any of the topics discussed. One topic of discussion was the budget shortfall and the strategies being considered to address it. As you are aware, a number of staff/instructors/vacant positions have been eliminated. As of now, we have eliminated 25 vacant positions. In addition, 23 current employees (17 staff and 6 fixed-term instructors) have been notified that their position is being eliminated effective at the end of their current contract period. The number of current employees is lower than originally projected as some staff have been moved to other vacant positions for which they qualify.

As for PAC- 26, there was quite a bit of discussion regarding whether or not the BOR should vote on it in its current form. The faculty do not support the document as it is written, which was brought forth by the BOR workgroup assigned to this task. The BOR chair informed everyone that the decision to vote on the PAC as written is solely a board matter, and that it will not be going back to the faculty senate nor the president for review. As far as I know, the PAC is still on the agenda to be voted on at the June 10 meeting. As you are aware, Dr. Andrews announced his retirement effective June 30, 2017. The BOR will begin the process of hiring a search firm in order to select a new president. Announcements regarding the process/search committee will be posted on a website that all employees will have access to. An announcement about the web site will be sent via email when it is established. As always, please encourage your constituents (this applies to you as well as members of congress) to contact me with questions/concerns any time. I meet with the president before each meeting to discuss any issues brought forth by the staff. I have received no questions/concerns to take to the president thus far. Respectfully submitted, Shannon Harr

Human Resources Report: Harold Nally

Harold Nally was unable to attend and no report was submitted. Michelle Hardin did state that Human Resources is collecting resumes from the people who were laid off and are trying to place them in positions, when possible.

Cabinet Report: Beth Patrick

VP Patrick was not present and no report was submitted.

OLD BUSINESS: Chair Dennis stated we are still looking for a consistent meeting space since ADUC is off-line for renovations. Secretary Purnell stated Tauyna Jones mentioned in her presentation to Staff Congress last month there would be a room in Combs retrofitted to have the same functionality as the Riggle Room. That room may be a possibility once it is on-line.

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion:	To approve Scott Niles as Chair of Staff Congress 2016-2017 by acclamation since no one else ran for this position	
	Proposed: Credentials & Elections Committee	Seconded: None Needed
Called for Vote:	Motion passed.	

Motion:	To approve Clarissa Purnell as Vice-Chair of Staff Congress for 2016-2017 by acclamation since no one else ran for this position	
	Proposed: Credentials & Elections Committee	Seconded: None Needed
Called for Vote:	Motion passed.	

Motion:	To approve Jessica Thompson as Secretary of Staff Congress for 2016-2017 by acclamation since no one else ran for this position	
	Proposed: Credentials & Elections Committee	Seconded: None Needed
Called for Vote:	Motion passed.	

Representative Jimmie Martin was appointed Parliamentarian by Chair-Elect Niles. Representative Hunsucker mentioned a change in the overtime rules effective December 1, 2016 and suggested someone from Payroll and Human Resources be present at the next meeting to discuss ramifications.

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CONCERN

UPCOMING EAGLE EVENTS

- Monday, June 6 – Friday, July 1: Summer I Session
- Saturday, June 11: Basketball Courts Re-Open (Recreation & Wellness Center)
- SOAR Sessions: June 9, 10, 14, and July 12 (June SOAR sessions will be in ADUC)
- Saturday, June 18: Success Academy Move In (**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**)
- Sunday, June 19: Governor’s Scholar Program Move In (**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**)
- Monday, July 4th: Independence Day (University Closed)
- Tuesday, July 5 – Friday, July 29: Summer II Session
- Monday, July 11: Next STAFF CONGRESS meeting (Rader 112) 1:00 p.m.

OFFICE RELOCATIONS

- Conference and Event Services (moving May 4): AY 006, 009, 011, 013
- University Post Office (moving 5/9- 5/13): AY 004, 007
- Eagle Card Office (moving week of 5/23): AY 030, 031
- Eagle Diversity Education Center (move time tentative): AY 317, 318, 319
- University Call Center (TBD): AY 033
- MSU Teach: LC 101, 102, 109
- Student Life (June 1): Rowan County School Central Office
- Student Activities (moving starting June 6): Rowan County School Central Office
- Admissions & Financial (last week of July): Rowan County School Central Office
- Temporary Dining Facility open second week of June

**For volunteer opportunities during
Success Academy
and/or
Governor’s Scholar Program Move-In,
please go to VOLUNTEER HUB!**

**Volunteers are needed for GSP Move-In
Sunday, June 19, 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 19, 11: 30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Volunteers are needed for GSP Closing Day
Saturday, July 23, 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**