Appalachian State University Staff Senate Minutes
Tuesday, September 10, 2013
Plemmons Student Union, Linville Falls Room

Attendance:

Present: Anderson, Carol; Berry, Elaine; Burleson, Sheila; Chambers, Robin; Clark, Kay; Craft, Betsy; Dale, Patty; Dehus, Sydney; Eckerd, Monique; Gainey, Courtney; Grant, Tony; Hoffman, Kate; Love, Amy; Mann, Kathy; McCaffrey, Kerri; McInturff, Jackie; Mitchell, Andrea; Paige, Russell; Perry, Amanda; Ragan, Greg; Ray, Kathy; Riedl, Tess; Sanders, Amy; Sbarbaro, Katherine; Scarborough, Barbara; Smith, Janice; Snook, Kevin; Tibbett, Debi; Triplett, Debbie; Trivette, Cindy; Whittington, Kathy; Wood, Angel; Ziegler, Cathy

Excused: Bentley, Teresa; Carriere, Debbie; Carter, Kim; Church, Lynn; Deas, Kathy; Gryder, Alice; Hicks, Sandy; Lyons, Danna; Tedder, Jamie

Absent: Carter, Leslie; Eggers, Gloria; Eldreth, Chelsie; Eller, Peggy; Gill-Johnson, Sali; Gragg, Debbie; Harmon, Kara; Harrison, Kathy; Huffman, Julie; Hyle, Eddie; Hyle, Kristin; Jamison, David; Lambert, Jamy; Link, Loretta; Lowenberg, Diane; Lunsford, Mark; Marsh, Clinton; McCormick, Marty; Merrell, Donna; Parnell, Regina; Piazza, Joseph; Probst, Elizabeth; Roach, Roy; Saunders, Shannon; Scott, Cathy; Stocker, Thomas; Tickle, Jeff; Travis, David; Wallin, Charlie; Waters, Robin; Watson, Lisa; Young, Vickie

Visitors: Heather Visingard and Judy [Ward?] from University Advancement

Action items for Senators and Alternates:

• Encourage staff in your area to attend an information session on the new State Health Plan open enrollment. See http://workshops.appstate.edu/detail.aspx?key=946 for dates and registration.

• AppKIDS is currently seeking volunteer drivers and shoppers for the AppKIDS shopping day on Nov. 22 (snow date: Dec. 6).

Announcements:

• Kudos to Alice Gryder and Barbara Scarborough for their work on Freshman Move-In Day.

• If you would like to donate to the 2013 AppKIDS shopping day, see http://staffsenate.appstate.edu/service-projects/appkids-event. The deadline for donations for the 2013 event is November 7.

Mark your calendar:

• Oct. 8 – 7:30 am - Staff Appreciation & Awards Breakfast - Central Dining Hall
• Oct. 8 – Senate meeting – 226 Plemmons Student Union – Linville Falls Room
• Nov. 12 – Senate meeting – 226 Plemmons Student Union – Linville Falls Room
• Nov. 22 – AppKIDS shopping day (snow date: Dec. 6)
Minutes:

1) **Meeting was called to order** by Kevin Snook at 1:33pm.

2) **Approval of minutes:** The August 13, 2013 Staff Senate meeting minutes were approved by general consent with no changes.

3) **Treasurer’s Report:**

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4) Chair’s Update – Kevin Snook (15 min)
   a) **Chancellor Search update:** The search committee has met and is in the process of selecting a search firm that will assist with the search process. Once a search firm is selected, open forums will be held. They are tentatively scheduled for the week of the 24th, but dates and times are not yet firm. Tentatively, the faculty/staff-specific open forum will be September 27th. Some forums will be for other constituent groups (students, community members). Come to an open forum and discuss what you are looking for in a Chancellor.
   b) **Freshman Move-in** was a big success. Thanks to everyone who helped. Cathy Ziegler: It really helped to have the banners for the Staff Senate tents.

5) **Watauga Medical Center update** (Angie Miller, Human Resources): If anyone has read materials coming out from the State Health Plan, they may have noticed that Watauga Medical Center is not a Blue Options-designated hospital. Wilkes Regional and Duke are not Blue Options-designated either. The hospital in Lenoir is Blue Options-designated, as is Baptist in Winston-Salem. A complete list of Blue Options hospitals will come out, and more information will be distributed in the forthcoming Human Resources Open Enrollment trainings. We do not know exactly what it means that Watauga Medical Center is not a Blue Options hospital. What we know right now is that the $200-odd inpatient copay will not be waived for hospitals that are not Blue Options-designated. Right now, there are already some services at Watauga Medical Center that are out-of-network, including the services of the hospitalist (in-hospital doctor). Angie has been told that some scheduled procedures will be considered in-network and some will be considered out-of-network, but Watauga Medical Center has not been able to provide Angie with a list of which procedures will be in- or out-of-network.
network. If you plan to seek care from Watauga Medical Center, contact their finance department for a cost estimate and ask them which services will be in- or out-of-network. Procedures are classified by a CPT code. **In an emergency situation, go to your closest health-care facility.**

**Emergency care is always considered in-network.**

i) Question: This is through the end of 2014?  Angie:  Correct. I’ve been told twice that it is too late for Watauga Medical to become a Blue Options hospital for 2014, but that they will do whatever it takes to become a Blue Options hospital for 2015.

ii) Question from Sydney: Why aren’t they a Blue Options designated hospital?  Angie: There are many factors that go into this designation, so I cannot tell you all of the criteria, or which ones were not met by Watauga Medical Center. One of the criteria is whether the hospital is willing to accept certain reimbursement rates. Another factor is whether the hospital is able to perform certain procedures.

iii) Kevin Snook: Kevin has been communicating with Gillian Baker, the communications director for AppRHS, to find out the latest news. He will share major development with the Senate.

iv) Question from guest: If a hospital is designated Blue Options, does it mean that they are completely in-network, rather than having some in- and out-of-network services piecemeal?  Angie: Yes.

v) Question from Debi Tibbett: So they are Blue Options designated now, but not in 2014?  Angie: No, the Blue Options designation is new for 2014. Some services at Watauga Medical have been out of network since 2006. ASU Human Resources has tried to change this, but Watauga Medical has not been receptive.

vi) Carol Anderson: If we all start driving to another hospital, that’s one way to influence Watauga Medical.

vii) Andrea Mitchell: What about the Urgent Care centers?  Are those a better option than the ER now?  Angie:  FastMed is in-network, but last I heard, the newer urgent care center is still working on getting their in-network designation.

viii) Kevin Snook: Once we get a list of in- and out-of-network procedures, we will share the list with everyone, and also organize a campaign to get Watauga Medical designated for 2015.  Monique Eckerd: Angie, do you anticipate having a list [of the services that are in- and out-of-network at Watauga Medical Center] by the time we have to sign up for open enrollment?  Angie: Unfortunately, no.

ix) Carol: Is the State Health Place allowing negotiations between now and 2014, meaning that there is some chance Watauga Medical could get the designation over the next few months?  Angie: From discussions with Amy Crabbe and Richard Sparks [of the Appalachian Regional Healthcare System], if there was a way to change this for 2014, they would have. They have told me twice that there is no way they can become a designated hospital for 2014. However, there are certainly factors beyond my knowledge or control, so I can’t guarantee that this can change.
6) **Information regarding Chief Human Resource Officer** – Statement from Kevin Snook: Patrick McCoy is out of the office indefinitely. In his absence, Angie Miller will be handling any issues, meetings, and duties that arise on his behalf. The administration understands the concerns that this situation is causing, and has expressed to me to tell you, the Staff Senate, their desire to resolve it in a timely matter and by the book. We need to understand and protect the privacy and employee rights of all parties involved, as well as protect the university, and any statement made at this point from the university would only impede the process and possibly put the university in a legal bind. Please give the situation time to resolve itself, allow for due diligence, don’t make any rush to judgment, don’t practice or perpetuate any rumors or speculation. Once the process is complete, the university will make an official statement. The HR department has been instructed not to talk about the issue, so please do not ask them.

7) **Human Resources Update** – Angie Miller:
   a) **Open Enrollment Update** – This is a significant, busy year for State Health Plan Annual Enrollment. Action is required, even if you want to stay in the plan you currently have. If you’re in the 80-20 plan and you do not log in and complete the enrollment process, you will be bumped to the 70-30 plan. There are trainings almost every day from late September through the end of open enrollment (October 31), and there are also offering targeted sessions (e.g., for Dining Services) and night sessions for shift employees.
      i) Question from Debi Tibbett: Often, different questions arise in different sessions. Will questions and answers be added to the website, so everyone can see the questions from all sessions? Angie: Yes, we’ll be collecting FAQ for the website.
   b) **Supervisor Development Series** started, led by Courtney
   c) This is a busy time period for SPA and EPA hiring.
   d) Monique Eckerd: Have you scheduled a session for retirees about State Health Plan Open Enrollment? Amy Sanders: I am working on that.
   e) Amy Sanders: I encourage every Senator to go to an information session, and to encourage everyone in their office to go.

8) **Committee Updates:**
   a) **AppKIDS** – Cindy Trivette:
      i) Thank you to everyone who signed up as a building collection volunteer and/or donated. If you are a collection volunteer and have not yet taken your supplies to the JET building (Janice Voss in 232 or Janice Smith in 321), please take them or contact Cindy Trivette if you need to arrange a pick-up or other assistance.
      ii) Cathy Ziegler distributed volunteer sign-up sheets for drivers (morning-only) and shoppers (all day). The 2013 AppKIDS shopping day is Friday, November 22nd. (The alternate/snow date is December 6.) See the Staff Senate website for more information: [http://staffsenate.appstate.edu/service-projects/appkids-event](http://staffsenate.appstate.edu/service-projects/appkids-event)
   b) **Winter Break Closing Committee** – Debi Tibbett:
      i) The staff survey closed yesterday. Most people are in favor closing over the break, but only if they have options, such as working from home or working from alternate locations. (For
example, Rankin Science, CAP, and the Music cannot be closed, so people could work in those locations instead of their office if their building is closed.) We will be asking for advance notice and distribution of information (workshops, information online) so that employees know all of their options for using leave, working from alternate locations, etc. For example, NCSU provides a clear five-year plan so that employees can plan for future years’ closings.

ii) The survey results also showed that staff members were strongly opposed to moving holidays to cover the closing dates. Katherine Sbarbaro: Which holidays? Debi: We didn’t ask about specific holidays. Katherine Sbarbaro: It’s standard practice here that we do move at least two holidays every year. Debi: One of the ideas that was proposed for closing over the winter break was moving additional holidays. The University Calendar Committee is meeting on Sep. 18. Debi Tibbett is a representative on this committee, and will bring back the information from the survey to the calendar committee that staff do not like holidays to be moved.

iii) Monique: One of the issues that came up in the survey comments was a divide between departments/divisions. There was a big divide between staff members about what other divisions do (e.g., “It wouldn’t hurt so-and-so to take time off because they don’t do what I do…”). I would appreciate suggestions about how to create more solidarity and mutual respect to change this culture.

(1) Sydney: I find that everything has its season, so I may see someone who is not extremely busy at a certain time of year, but they are extremely busy at other times.

(2) Tony Grant: When I first joined Staff Council, there was a newsletter that came out three or four times a year highlighting a specific staff member and what they do. This was a nice way to get information out about what staff members across campus do. Kevin Snook: We’re working with the Communication Committee to bring that back.

(3) Carol Anderson: When shifts in responsibilities are made, it would be nice to know why that shift is being made. As departmental administrators are being asked to do more and more tasks, it would be nice to know what new tasks other people have to do that have led to more tasks being shifted to the departmental administrators.

iv) Monique: The Winter Break Closing Committee is moving very fast and meeting frequently (about once a month). So far everyone has been working pretty closely together. We also asked to see figures for savings per building.

v) Debi Tibbett: According to Jerry [Marshall], there are so many variations that it is hard to estimate savings per building. Snook: It’s not a cost savings in the sense that we use less energy and save money. It’s a cost savings in the sense that the energy company lowers our rates with the expectation that we will lower energy use, but if we do not obtain those lower use rates, we will be charged extra, and that money will have to come from other budgets (e.g., Business Affairs). Tony Grant: Thank you for explaining that, because I had wondered why, if we’re saving money, that money does not come back to us in some form we can see.
vi) Monique Eckerd: The best thing we can do as staff is to say, if we are going to close over winter break, what do staff want to make this as manageable and painless as possible?

vii) Cathy Ziegler: Are the survey results on the Staff Senate website? Kevin Snook: I’ll post a PDF. The response rate has been very high.

viii) Patty Dale: One of the survey questions was about donating time [to employees who do not have enough leave time to cover the closing]. Is that an option? Debi and Monique: Unfortunately, it is not an option. We included it in the survey because staff members had asked us about it, and we didn’t realize it was not an option. Angie Miller: The state is very specific about why leave can be donated, and right now, employees can only donate leave to employees who are out for 20+ days for a medical condition. Katherine Sbarbaro: Is it possible that we can get a special exception? Angie: Honestly, I don’t think so.

ix) Amy Sanders: Currently, only one holiday (Veteran’s Day) is moved to winter break.

x) Amanda Perry: We have the adverse weather policy where we can take leave and make it up on other weeks. Angie: You could not use adverse weather leave for winter break closing. We could not make a university-level policy on that, since we are governed by state policies on leave.

xi) Angie Miller: Supervisors can allow employees to go “in the hole” for leave if they do not have enough to cover the two days, as long as they make it up within a certain time frame. Debi Tibbett: This is the type of information we would like to put online.

xii) Carol Anderson: You cannot take sick leave for this time, right? Angie: No.

xiii) Andrea Mitchell: Can’t supervisors let their employees earn some comp. time to cover the closing days? Angie: If the employee is subject to comp. time, but not of the employee is exempt.

xiv) Amy Sanders: Food Services is closed over the break, so they know when they’re hired that they have to take that time off. Angie: Yes, they have spring, fall, and winter mandatory shutdowns.

xv) Amy Sanders: We also have community service leave that many employees do not use, so we’ll try to provide a list of volunteer opportunities during the closing days. The ACT office is our Staff Senate speaker next month.

c) **Smoking Policy Committee**– Katherine Sbarbaro: What is your experience so far with the new smoking policy?

i) Kerri McCaffrey: I’ve heard that the map of designated smoking areas is unclear, and have talked to a lot of students saying they had not heard about the new policy.

ii) Carol Anderson: It’s bad that the bus stop at Raley circle is a designated smoking area, because you have to walk through a cloud of smoke to get to/from your car.

iii) Tony Grant: It would be helpful to put some signage next to the air intakes for buildings on campus so that people do not smoke next to them Katherine Sbarbaro: We’re not supposed to need those, because there is supposed to be no smoking except in designated areas.

iv) Katherine Sbarbaro: There was supposed to be an informational/enforcement push from campus police at the beginning of the semester, with police distributing cards to smokers
explaining the policy and showing designated smoking areas, and handouts being
distributed to students in orientation packets and departments about the new policy. Tony
Grant: What about distributing the cards along with candy? Kay Clark: Unfortunately, the
new policy doesn’t seem to mean a lot; if anything, it has made some people more
belligerent about smoking in non-designated areas. Russell: I would suggest that another e-
mail go out to the whole campus, including students, with a very simple explanation of the
new policy. Katherine: So we need a more concerted communication effort about what the
new policy is and where you can/cannot smoke. Snook: Maps.appstate.edu does have the
smoking map. Katherine: Am I right that another area is what we can do to help    Tess Riedl:
Can we get a list of committee members so that if we have suggestions/concerns, we can
send them to the whole committee? Katherine Sbarbaro: Send it to me or to Jackie
McInturff; we can share it with the committee. Debi Tibbett (?): There has actually been a
great improvement at my building. It’s also noteworthy that some of our new health plan
options have incentives for stopping smoking.

d) Communication Committee – Jackie McInturff: We are always looking for new members, and
will need help to bring back the Staff Update newsletter.

e) Chancellor Appreciation Event – Kathy Whittington: We’ve met one time and I’m very grateful
to the people who have volunteered to help Kevin and me with this. We have guidelines about
the event’s purpose and are currently just exploring ideas and working on a date, budget, and
location. In terms of timing, the new Chancellor’s start date is supposed to be July 1, so the
event will need to happen before that. If you have ideas or want to join the group planning the
event, contact Kathy Whittington.

9) New Business:

a) Suggestion Box: Kevin sent an e-mail to the listserv asking for suggestions about issues Staff
Senate could address, and received many responses:

   i) Can we work with HR to change the timing of SPA work plans and evaluations to a calendar
      year system, rather than having evaluations due in May? Courtney Gainey: This issue has
      been raised before and there is not a perfect time for everyone on campus. Angie: The state
gives us deadlines of when we have to report performance rating. Amy Sanders: There isn’t
      a rule that says you cannot do evaluations early (e.g., in March), as long as the employee has
      been working at least three months under the work plan being evaluated.

   ii) Who is actually responsible for the enforcement of the smoking policy?

   iii) I’m not sure if this is the appropriate venue, but I’d love to see some work on improving staff
      morale on campus. The faculty survey revealed that faculty morale is low on campus, and I
      imagine a survey of staff would show an equal (or greater) low morale among staff. I
      personally believe that there are things that the administration can do to help improve
      morale for staff that would be low- or no-cost to the university, and could help with
      retention of high-quality staff members as well.

   iv) SPA compensation: When will SPA employees receive fair compensation for the work that
      they do?
(1) Angie Miller: Base salaries for employees are frozen through 2015, but there are some limited exceptions for a change in scope, duties, and/or competencies. General Administration is being very strict and frugal in approving these changes.

v) Lack of pay raises for the last six years, despite increasing workloads and cost of living.

vi) Why long-standing part-time permanent employees remain here for years in temporary positions that never become permanent positions with benefits.

(1) Angie Miller: Employees working 20-29 hours/week are not eligible for benefits. If you work 30+ hours, 9+ months of the year, then you are benefit-eligible, but it is up to the department to come up with the extra funding to cover benefits (which is 40.14% of their salary).

vii) Speakers: I would attend Senate meetings if you had some new guest speakers, such as outside speakers, professional consultants, or motivational speakers.

viii) Parking: I would like to see faculty/staff parking fees forgiven until staff receive a reasonable raise.

(1) Kevin Snook: That would help morale, but the parking fees support essential services so I’m not sure they could be waived.

ix) Benefits to Staff: What does Staff Senate really do for employees, as opposed to community service?

(1) Amanda Perry: That goes back to the last comment. Maybe we should have an action plan to actually address comments, rather than just showing them in a meeting.

(2) Snook: We also should do a better job of communicating what we are doing. We do a lot of things that never make it into our minutes (and people may not read the minutes).

b) Further discussion of how to handle these and other future suggestions received by Staff Senate:

i) Courtney: What about some type of social event for all staff where they could meet Senators and get to know each other?

ii) Carol Anderson: Or a forum where they can raise issues? Amy Sanders: It might be helpful to hold this event in conjunction with the fall Faculty/Staff meeting.

iii) Kay Clark: You could add fresh news to the Staff Senate website front page, and a new section on the website with answers to suggestions.

iv) Cathy Ziegler: In doing that, I think it would be a good idea to summarize the question, to avoid identifying details for the person who raised the question.

v) Debi Tibbett: Maybe we could come up with a series on staff development?

vi) Tony Grant: In terms of the website responding to the comments, we talked about this before, but we thought it might make people more comfortable to have e-mail as a clearinghouse and a website that summarizes, rather than a forum where people may not be comfortable sharing information.

vii) Note: In follow-up emails after the meeting, Staff Senate decided to add anonymous summaries of comments to the Staff Senate website and follow up on each question. Expect a forthcoming announcement.
10) **Kudos** to Alice Gryder and Barbara Scarborough for their work on Freshman Move-In Day.

11) **Open Comments:**
   a) Amy Sanders: Please sign up for the Strategic Planning Open Forums that were recently advertised on the staff e-mail list.
   b) Carol Anderson: The Staff Appreciation breakfast is nice, but do Dining Services staff members ever get a break? They prepare the food for all of those appreciation events. Could we do a special event just for Dining Services, and/or do something to make these events easier on Food Services staff?
   c) Courtney Gainey: I think it would be a good morale booster if Staff Senate did a social event specifically for Food Services, Housekeeping / Physical Plant. Katherine Sbarbaro: I think if we have a staff appreciation event, it should be one event, and that divisions should not be separated, even if that means bringing in a caterer rather than having food provided by Dining Services.

12) Adjournment: Amy Sanders made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Debi Tibbett. The meeting adjourned at 3:06pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Love, Secretary