Appalachian State University Staff Senate Minutes
November 12, 2013
226 Linville Falls Room, Plemmons Student Union, 1:30pm

Action items for Senators and Alternates:

- Contact Chelsie Eldreth if you would like to sell Dining Cards.

Announcements:

- Kudos to Vickie Young for volunteering at the Staff Appreciation Tailgate.
- Winter Clothing Drive: We are collecting new or gently-used winter clothing for adults and children, and fleece blankets for animals at the animal shelter, Nov. 15-Dec. 12. Look for a collection box in your building, or contact Russell Paige for a list of drop-off locations. You can also bring items to the Staff Senate Holiday Party.

Mark your calendar:

- Senate Meeting and Holiday Party: December 10 at 1:30 pm in Student Union 420 – Parkway Ballroom.
  The annual Senate photo will be taken during the meeting. Bring a wrapped gift (approximately $5, or a regifted item) if you would like to participate in the White Elephant gift exchange, and/or an unwrapped toy (no realistic weapons or toys with food) if you would like to donate to Toys for Tots.

Attendance:

Present: Anderson, Carol; Burleson, Sheila; Carriere, Debbie; Church, Lynn; Clark, Kay; Craft, Betsy; Dehus, Sydney; Eckerd, Monique; Eldreth, Chelsie; Gainey, Courtney; Hicks, Sandy; Hoffman, Kate; Love, Amy; Mann, Kathy; McCaffrey, Kerri; McInturff, Jackie; Miller, Angélie; Mitchell, Andrea; Paige, Russell; Ragan, Greg; Ray, Kathy; Richards, Brooke; Roach, Roy; Sanders, Amy; Sbarbaro, Katherine; Scarborough, Barbara; Snook, Kevin; Tibbett, Debi; Whittington, Kathy; Young, Vickie; Ziegler, Cathy

Excused: Bentley, Teresa; Berry, Elaine; Carter, Kim; Dale, Patty; Deas, Kathy; Smith, Janice; Tedder, Jamie; Trivette, Cindy

Absent: Barbee, Diana; Carpenter, Erin; Carter, Leslie; Eggers, Gloria; Eller, Peggy; Gill-Johnson, Sali; Gragg, Debbie; Grant, Tony; Gryder, Alice; Harmon, Kara; Harrison, Kathy; Huffman, Julie; Hyle, Eddie; Hyle, Kristin; Jamison, David; Lambert, Jamy; Link, Loretta; Lowenberg, Diane; Lunsford, Mark; Lyons, Danna; Marsh, Clinton; McCormick, Marty; Merrell, Donna; Parnell, Regina; Perry, Amanda; Piazza, Joseph; Probst, Elizabeth; Saunders, Shannon; Scott, Cathy; Stocker, Thomas; Tickle, Jeff; Travis, David; Wallin, Charlie; Waters, Robin; Watson, Lisa; Wood, Angel

Visitors: Brooke Richards, Academic Affairs (will be serving as new alternate for Kathy Ray); Melissa Isaacs, Athletics
Minutes:

1) Meeting was called to order by Kevin Snook at 1:34pm.

2) Approval of minutes: The October 8, 2013 Staff Senate meeting minutes were approved by general consent with the following changes: Cathy Ziegler sent an e-mail correction before the meeting correcting the snow date location for the AppKIDS shopping day.

3) Treasurer’s Report: The treasurer’s report was approved by general consent with no changes. Kevin Snook reported that we are operating further in the red as we have not yet received our state allocation, and dining cards were purchased out of our operating fund this month. He also congratulated the AppKIDS committee for their excellent fundraising work.

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4) Guest Speaker – Chancellor Peacock was scheduled as a guest speaker, but was unable to attend.

5) Chair’s Update – Kevin Snook:
   a) Chancellor’s Search update:
      i) The search committee voted to do a closed search. The search firm told the committee that they will lose most qualified candidates if they opt for an open search.
      ii) A job description will be posted soon on chancellorsearch.appstate.edu. It will include information about the campus, student body, faculty, staff, local community, etc.
      iii) Timeline: The search committee will meet (closed meeting) in mid-December to discuss candidates. Ideally, interviews in January; place someone by July 1.
      iv) Question from Monique Eckerd: When will we know the final candidates? Kevin Snook: You will not know the final candidates, unless the search committee votes to open the search to a larger group. If we get three finalists and those three finalists give permission, we could potentially open the search, but that is a decision that would have to be made by the whole committee.
b) Board of Trustees / Board of Governors Summit report: The BOG & BOT from all universities came together last week at NCSU for the first time in something like 10 years. Susan Colby, Chair of Staff Assembly, was there representing staff throughout the system. ASU’s Board of Trustees is the only other one in the UNC system that has a staff member on board, which is why Snook was able to attend. The topic of the summit was how to coordinate efforts across campuses and work effectively as a statewide university system in the current climate.

c) Staff Assembly October meeting report:
   i) Jackie McInturff: Staff Assembly elected a new chair (Susan Colby) for a two-year term. Hopefully Susan will visit ASU in the spring.
   ii) Amy Sanders – We did some team-building activities among the delegates attending, and talked about how each campus’s Staff Senate functions, so we got some good ideas and perspectives. Tom Ross attended, so we got to ask about outsourcing and about ASU’s staffing levels relative to student body size. In terms of outsourcing, they said that it is in their business interests to study outsourcing as a possibility, so that they have data if they are asked whether they have run the numbers, but a study will not necessarily indicate that outsourcing is the best option. In terms of staffing levels, ASU is “caught in the middle” because we do not need as much staff as an R1-type university, but we have economies of scale that the very small campuses do not have.
   iii) Snook will be serving as a delegate at large for Staff Assembly.
   iv) Staff Appreciation Tailgate – Kevin Snook: A Staff Appreciation Tailgate was held on November 2nd and was a big success. Courtney Gainey sent an e-mail to Kevin Snook pointing out that NCSU has a Staff Appreciation Tailgate and suggesting that ASU could do the same, so Kevin obtained discounted tickets to a football game this year. Hopefully next year there will be free tickets for staff. The event sponsors are listed on Staff Senate website; sponsors were very generous with door prizes, food, etc.

6) HR Update – Angie Miller:
   a) Annual enrollment:
      i) The goal for ending annual enrollment (Oct. 31) was extended by the state to Nov. 15, because there were a large number of employees who had not made an election. In ASU, roughly 40% had signed up as of October 31, but it’s hard to judge those numbers since employees who did not make an election defaulted into the 70/30 plan, and many people may have already been on 70/30 plan or wanted to switch to it. Currently, 70% of ASU employees have made an election, which is good.
      ii) There are many problems with the electronic system for enrollment, which was a statewide contract, not something ASU developed.
      iii) Retirees have had big problems with the electronic system. ASU HR held a retiree information session with ~475 attendees at St. Elizabeth’s. ASU HR also attended the NC Retired School Personnel convention, where they were able to speak to a lot of retirees in this region.
iv) HR held two night sessions for people working second shift. Their most recent estimate is that 2,500 people have attended trainings, including the retiree trainings. The 3 HR benefits staff have each taken ~100 calls per day during open enrollment.

v) 2014 challenge for HR will be implementation of Affordable Care Act. The employer mandate was delayed until Jan. 1, 2015.

vi) Only about 90 people at ASU enrolled in the new CDHP plan, but that is to be expected with any new plan.

vii) Question from Kay Clark: If every person actually made an election who was benefit-eligible at ASU, how many people would that be in total? Angie: Approximately 2800-3000?

b) New OSHR policies:

i) Probationary period:

(1) As of August 21, the probationary period for new SPA hires has been changed to 24 months. If for any reason, an SPA employee has a break in service of >31 days, then they serve another 24 month probationary period. For example, an SPA employee who takes an interim position as an EPA employee, then returns to SPA position when EPA position is filled, will have to go through another probationary period. This makes recruitment very difficult, so the UNC system plans to advocate against this change in the next legislative session.

(2) Question from Kevin Snook: Is it true that a probationary employee is not eligible for legislative increases? Angie Miller: No, that is not our interpretation.

(3) Question from Sandy Hicks: Can probationary employees apply for another position on campus? Angie Miller: Yes, but they are not given priority consideration.

(4) Question from Kay Clark: Will that apply to the new chancellor? Angie Miller: No, it only applies to SPA employees.

(5) Question from Sydney Dehus: What was the probationary period before? Angie Miller: Usually 6 months, but could be as few as 3 or as many as 9 months.

ii) Proposed changes to grievance policy (not yet approved/implemented):

(1) A standardized grievance policy for all state agencies has been proposed. The UNC General Administration reached out to chancellors for feedback on the proposed policy. Some suggested changes were accepted, and will go to the state personnel commission in December. If the personnel commission votes for the new policy, it will go into effect March 2014.

(2) Changes: Mediation is required if an employee files a grievance. Each state agency must have trained mediators who can mediate at another state agency. In the past, the final agency decision rested with the chancellor after a grievance panel made a recommendation; the chancellor chose to overturn or uphold the recommendation. In the new system, the chancellor would be required to coordinate with OSHR before a
final decision is made, and the chancellor and OSHR must come to a collaborative decision.

(3) From start to finish, the entire grievance process should not be more than 90 days. This timeline is a problem on a college campus. For example, what if an employee files a grievance with a faculty member in May, and the faculty member is gone until the fall semester?

(4) Question: Are our mediators at ASU SPA or EPA? Angie Miller: We have both, but keep in mind that ASU mediators would never mediate an ASU case.

(5) Question: How are mediators trained? Angie Miller: It is a 40-hour training; employees travel to Raleigh for a full week to learn about the mediation process and do practice dispute mediations. Trainees go through OSHR’s training, which familiarizes mediators with state policies about mediation. The financial burden of sending people to mediation training is significant, and it is an unfunded mandate.

7) Committee Updates:

a) AppKIDS – Cathy Ziegler:
   i) AppKIDS has raised over $25,000. (The goal was $15,000.) Some of those were significant donations from trustees, along with generous donations from campus employees.
   ii) We need one more driver for the Mabel School. Drivers are morning-only; you arrive at the school at 7:45am, bring them to the Student Union, and you’re typically done by 8:30-8:45.
   iii) We also need backup drivers for every school, and seven more shoppers, who use donated funds to go shopping for clothing for that time. You can request to be paired with a child in a specific age range or of a specific gender.

b) Winter Break Committee Update – Monique Eckerd:
   i) The committee met two weeks ago. Our recommendation has been sent, and it reflects all feedback received. It is now with Lorin Baumhover, and it is supposed to go back to the committee after being reviewed, then go to Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and HR for review.
   ii) The committee hoped to have a plan in place as soon to Dec. 1 as possible so that staff have time to plan ahead for next year, since this change would be effective December 2014.
   iii) Because of new state payroll requirements, Dec. 23 will always be a workday, so the potential campus closure would be Dec. 24-Jan. 1 every year; taking holidays into account, this would usually mean closing during 2 or 3 workdays.
   iv) Amy Sanders: The calendar committee is working on calendars for future years, but right now the memos from the state office still have Dec. 23 listed as a holiday.
   v) Question from Sydney Dehus: Was there a deadline [for a response to the recommendation]? Debi Tibbett: We hope to have a decision before [December] graduation.
   vi) Question from Amy Sanders: From a PR perspective, it will be confusing to publicize a decision about December 2014 in December 2013; it would be better to wait until January 2014. Debi: We may not release all details that soon, but want to at least notify everyone
that a change is going to happen and details are forthcoming, so that people can prepare / stay informed.

c) Chancellor’s Advisory Committee: Their next meeting with Chancellor is Tuesday, Nov. 26.

d) Scholarship Committee & Dining Cards – Chelsie Eldreth:
   i) The committee is ordering 125 dining cards this year since they ordered 100 last year and sold out. The cards have not arrived yet, but should within the next few days. Chelsie distributed a sign-up sheet for people willing to sell dining cards, along with printed flyers. If you want PDF flyers, e-mail Chelsie Eldreth.
   ii) Question from Kay Clark: Do we no longer have a link on our website? Chelsie: We do, or people can always contact me directly.

8) New Business:
   a) Winter Clothing Drive – Russell Paige:
      i) Russell is looking for volunteers willing to set up a collection box in their work area. We are accepting all kinds of winter clothes this year (hats, gloves, etc.). It is helpful if you can bring donated items to the library at the end of the donation period, but Russell can arrange a pickup if needed. We are also accepting fleece blankets for dogs and cats at the Humane Society. The drive will run from Nov. 15-Dec. 12.
      ii) Sandy Hicks: In our department, we get a lot of lost and found items, so we donate lost items at the end of the year.

   b) December meeting plan:
      i) In December, we will have a shortened business meeting, then a holiday party. The location will be PSU 420, the Parkway Ballroom.
      ii) We will do a white elephant gift exchange. There is a $5 limit on the gift. Participate only if you want, but if you play you have to stay.
      iii) Question from Kay Clark: Can we raise the $5 gift limit? Sandy Hicks: If you want to bring something that costs a little more than $5, you can, but it’s not an expectation. Carol Anderson: It is also okay to bring unwanted gifts you have received. We will also be doing Staff Senate pictures that day.

   c) The Have a Heart Campaign for Staff Assembly is coming up; Jackie McEnturff will distribute details.

9) Kudos – To Vickie Young for volunteering at the Staff Appreciation Tailgate.

10) Adjournment – Carol Anderson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jackie McEnturff. The meeting adjourned at 2:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Love, Secretary