Action items for Senators and Alternates:

- If you would like to volunteer or perform at this year’s Diversity Celebration (April 8), or donate to the Diversity Celebration, visit http://celebration.appstate.edu/.

Announcements:

- Kudos to Russell Paige for leading the Winter Clothing & Blanket Drive.

Mark your calendar:

- Senate meeting - Feb. 11 – 226 Plemmons Student Union – Linville Falls
- Senate meeting - Mar. 11 – 224 I.G. Greer
- Diversity Celebration – Apr. 8 – Plemmons Student Union

Attendance:

Present: Berry, Elaine; Burleson, Sheila; Carter, Kim; Church, Lynn; Dale, Patty; Dehus, Sydney; Eckerd, Monique; Eldreth, Chelsie; Grant, Tony; Hicks, Sandy; Hoffman, Kate; Love, Amy; Mann, Kathy; Miller, Angie; Mitchell, Andrea; Paige, Russell; Richards, Brooke; Sanders, Amy; Scarborough, Barbara; Smith, Janice; Snook, Kevin; Tibbett, Debi; Trivette, Cindy; Whittington, Kathy; Ziegler, Cathy

Excused: Bentley, Teresa; Craft, Betsy; Ray, Kathy

Absent: Anderson, Carol; Barbee, Diana; Carpenter, Erin; Carriere, Debbie; Carter, Leslie; Chambers, Robin; Deas, Kathy; Eggers, Gloria; Eller, Peggy; Gainey, Courtney; Gill-Johnson, Sali; Gragg, Debbie; Gryder, Alice; Harmon, Kara; Harrison, Kathy; Huffman, Julie; Hyle, Eddie; Hyle, Kristin; Jamison, David; Lambert, Jamy; Lowenberg, Diane; Lunsford, Mark; Lyons, Danna; Marsh, Clinton; McCaffrey, Kerri; McCormick, Marty; Merrell, Donna; Moore, Lisa; Parnell, Regina; Perry, Amanda; Piazza, Joseph; Probst, Elizabeth; Ragan, Greg; Roach, Roy; Saunders, Shannon; Sbarbaro, Katherine; Scott, Cathy; Stocker, Thomas; Tedder, Jamie; Tickle, Jeff; Travis, David; Wallin, Charlie; Waters, Robin; Watson, Lisa; Young, Vickie

Visitors: Marty Watkins, Building Services; Gus Peña, Multicultural Student Development; Sherri Williamson, Housing; Kelley Wolcott, International Education
Minutes:

1) **Meeting was called to order** by Kevin Snook at 1:30pm.

2) **Approval of minutes:** Cathy Ziegler submitted two corrections to the December 2013 meeting attendance records before the meeting. The December 10, 2013 Staff Senate meeting minutes were approved by general consent with no further changes.

3) **Treasurer’s Report:** The Treasurer’s Report was approved by general consent with no changes. We still have not received our annual allocation, so we have a negative balance on the operating fund.

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4) Guest speakers’ presentation – Gus Peña, Diversity Celebration:
   a) Diversity Celebration will be April 9, 2014, 3-9pm
   b) Family-friendly event. Much of the early programming (3-5pm) is geared toward kids and families.
   c) Volunteers are needed. Usually 200-300 volunteers help each year.
   d) Local storytellers, dancers, musicians, etc. are encouraged to participate.
   e) Sign up to volunteer or perform at the website: [http://celebration.appstate.edu/](http://celebration.appstate.edu/)
   f) Kelly and Sherri distributed Payroll Deduction forms.

5) Chair’s Update – Kevin Snook:
   a) The Chancellor Search Committee will be interviewing eight candidates this Thursday-Sunday. After the interviews, they will select three candidates to present to President Ross and the Board of Governors for review and selection of the new chancellor, who will be installed July 1.
   b) Question from Amy Sanders: Did you get much feedback from other people on campus from faculty and/or staff? Kevin Snook: Most of it came from faculty.
   c) Question from Amy Sanders: Have you finalized the list of questions? Kevin Snook: Yes, it has been finalized. It is a fairly scripted list of questions.
   d) The candidate pool is very diverse.
6) Winter break closing recommendations:
   a) Angie Miller: Hopefully, the Chancellor’s Cabinet will meet on Jan. 27. A recommendation (for what to do about non-holidays during a holiday closure) will be presented during the next Cabinet meeting. Once a final recommendation is approved, it can be shared with the Senate.
   b) Angie Miller: We received positive feedback on pilots (single-building closings) conducted over the last winter break.
   c) Question from Kevin Snook: Any feedback on this year’s closing / reduction of building usage? Answers from various Senators: Some of us who were the only ones in our buildings would have preferred to not work. Some people felt forced to use vacation time if they were in a building that closed, especially if their spouses had to work and they did not have travel plans. Some people worked voluntarily because it is a busy time for their department.
   d) Question from Kevin Snook: Any telecommuting? Answers from various Senators: Some were allowed to work from home, especially if the heat in their buildings had been turned down.
   e) Comments from various senators about the problems with December 23 becoming a pay day: Some people were told that they had to be available on the 23rd because it was a pay day and they were responsible for delivering checks, but felt that if everyone in their work area was on direct deposit, they should not need to work on the 23rd as long as they are available by cell phone to answer questions. Lynn Church and Angie Miller pointed out that around 800 people on campus still receive paper checks, so someone needed to be there on the 23rd in case there was a problem with a paper check. Angie Miller: [The late decision about December 23 being a pay day] caused frustration even in Human Resources, since many of our staff had already asked off but had to pulled back for payroll processing.

7) HR Update:
   a) Extremely busy year with many legislative mandates.
   b) In March 2014, HR will be implementing:
      i) New federal military veterans’ protection law: Changes will go into effect in 2014 and will affect recruitment and hiring.
      ii) Section 503 (disability-related): Will affect recruitment and hiring. HR is currently working on a recruiting plan and an EEO plan and setting benchmark goals.
      iii) March is the implementation date for the new Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) grievance policy. In this new policy, mediation was re-introduced back as mandatory, and the campus has to designate or train certified mediators. (Our mediators mediate grievances at other institutions and vice versa.) Institutions are allowed a maximum of 90 days from start to finish to handle a grievance filing. The final agency decision has to be made in collaboration with OSHR. HR will be holding open trainings for supervisors and employees.
      iv) Affordable Care Act implementation. The employer mandate goes into effect Jan. 1, 2015. HR will be working on that all year long; monitoring/compliance is a huge undertaking. In
the context of this law, Appalachian State is not seen as one employer; the entire UNC system is. Therefore, all 17 campuses have to make a plan together.

v) HR made it through flex enrollment, which was less eventful than medical annual enrollment. People are still having issues with medical annual enrollment, including ID cards that do not show a primary care provider (PCP) even though one has been designated. Retirees continue to struggle with the medical enrollment, and it is hard for them to get through to customer service personnel with the NC State Health Plan or Social Security / Medicare.

vi) Last week, HR welcomed a new employee in the Employment Specialist position.

vii) Lynn Church: Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) told someone they couldn’t keep existing policy without a huge cost increase, so that person decided to move her family to ASU insurance, and then BCBS decided they had made an error. Now that person is paying something like $200/month more for ASU insurance than she would be for BCBS. Others received similar letters, and I have heard that the state decided collectively that they would not grant exceptions to allow people in this situation to change back to their old insurance. Angie Miller: We processed every exception request we received at ASU; all of them were denied by the state. The UNC system petitioned the state to reconsider, but the state will not because we are a pre-tax plan and if we make any changes after the annual enrollment period, we would lose our pre-tax designation and everyone’s premiums in the SHP would go up.

viii) Sandy Hicks: What do we do if we have an incorrect insurance card? Angie Miller: Keep it for now. You do not need to let HR know if you have the wrong card. The State Health Plan says that doctor’s office should be familiar with the problem and only charge the $15 co-pay [for a visit to your designated primary care provider even if that PCP does not appear on your card]. If that does not occur, let Angie know.

ix) Kevin Snook: Any issues with state withholding changes? Angie Miller: None yet, but we have not paid employees yet under new withholding. We received 2500 tax forms that have to be coded manually. Look at your check and withholding for January and contact HR if too much or too little is being deducted. HR cannot give tax advice, but under the advice of Department of Revenue, most people making over $17,000/year should claim no exemptions.

x) Russell Paige: When we’re looking at our January paystub, if withholdings have been fine until that point and now they’re different, we can adjust that? Angie: Yes, by submitting a new NC-4. However, at the end of the year the standard deduction has almost been doubled over last year’s, so it will be hard to predict your ideal withholding amount until after 2014.

c) Committee Updates:

i) New members needed: Chancellor’s Advisory Committee needs a new member because Angel Wood has left the university. The Communications Committee needs several new members. Sign-up sheets were distributed.
ii) Scholarship Committee – Chelsie Eldreth: We are still selling Dining Cards; it has been slow. Contact Chelsie if you or someone in our area wants a card. Profits support Staff Senate scholarships.

iii) Russell Paige – Winter Clothing and Blanket Drive update: Donations doubled over what we received last year. Clothing went to the Hunger and Health Coalition, and Vickie Young took the blankets to the Humane Society.

iv) Calendar Committee – Debi Tibbett: The proposed calendar is posted online and an e-mail was sent asking for feedback. Patty Dale is collecting feedback; another e-mail will go out next week. Lynn Church: For the 2016 winter break, there are a lot of work days between Christmas and New Year’s. Angie Miller: We may have one additional holiday; this will depend on state payroll decisions.

d) New Business:

i) Committee Meetings before/after Senate Meetings – Kevin Snook: Other Staff Senates hold committee meetings during the monthly meeting (after an abbreviated business meeting). Since our committees have not been active and people might have a hard time getting away from the office for a committee meeting, would Senators be interested in doing this at ASU?

(1) Amy Sanders: Meetings would not last any longer than they do now. This would give committees a brief time to check in.

(2) Debi Tibbett: How does that work if you’re on more than one committee?

(3) Cathy Ziegler: I am willing to try it, but I will say that when AppKIDS meets, we have longer meetings than that, and we have some members who are not senators.

(4) Janice Smith: Can you give people the option to come at 1pm (before business meeting)?

ii) It is time to start thinking about nominations for officers; elections are coming up in April. We need a chair-elect and a treasurer.

iii) Angie Miller: I would like to get some feedback on how everyone perceived the most recent university closing.

(1) Monique Eckerd: Trying to get paid for that if you are classified as Critical & Essential is hard. There is no place to record that time if you had to be at work despite the closure. Lynn Church: This is supposed to be changed with new Adverse Weather Policy, which has been approved but not published. It is still in General Counsel’s office to be placed in campus resource manual. If you worked, your supervisor is supposed to send a spreadsheet to Payroll with a list of the staff required to come in that day. Payroll cross-checks this spreadsheet, and you should see additional accrued comp. time on leave report the next month.

(2) Staff did feel they received adequate notice.

(3) Employees will be paid for whatever the employee would normally work (e.g., people who work 10-hour shifts) if the campus were not closed.

(4) Kevin Snook: I would encourage everyone to send a thank-you e-mail to Greg Lovins.
8) Open Comments:
   a) Kathy Whittington – When is the Chancellor coming back to speak? Snook: He is rescheduled for the April Staff Senate meeting.
   b) Kudos – To Russell Paige for leading the Winter Clothing & Blanket Drive.
9) Adjournment: Amy Sanders made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kathy Mann. The meeting adjourned at 2:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Love, Secretary