

University Staff Senate Minutes

December 14, 2023, 11:00-1:00 p.m.

Raynor Memorial Library, Beaumier Suite C and virtual

Present

Elected representatives:

Calley Hostad, Kirsten Boeh, Amber Jensen, Lizzy Machado, Molly Eldridge, Tina Aiello, nRobin Cork, Latrice Harris-Collins, Sarah Kazlauskas, Yvonne Printz, Steven Robertson, John Sweeney, Rae-Ann Vanek, and Karli Webster

Other attendees:

Yasi Blackmon, Anna Borchardt, Coreen Bukowski, Paul Dion, Mary Dunnwald, Melissa Econom, Amy Kaboskey, Lizzie Kerrick, Tia Langes, Elizabeth Voltner, Karina Mendoza, Tammy Meyers, Lori Montezon, Maria Mostek, Karen Nest, Kim Patterson, Patricia Psuik, Ariel Roche, Melanie Roepke, Katie Ruetz, Ritu Sachdev, Carol Trecek, Lisa Vlach

Meeting started by Calley Hostad at 11:03am.

Reflection led by Tina Aiello.

Special Business/Meeting Guests/Topics

Guest Speakers: [Dr. Chris Navia, Vice President for Inclusive Excellence](#)

Link to meeting recording with slides here.

1. Calley: This is her 2nd year and she' here to give us an update on the university's work on DEI.
2. Dr. Navia: One thing we're focused on is how we will handle the upcoming presidential season.
3. In DEI space, covering what is happening in the middle east.
 - a. Major loss due to bombings
 - b. Historically contested territory.
 - c. We have Jewish students and Muslim students, the closer you are to that the more difficult it is for community members.
 - d. Taking care of students, navigating terrain of free speech, different groups who want to present their views on the conflict, I feel like we're doing a lot of echo chambers rather than creating a discussion, I'm okay with that, I think that's appropriate for this moment my hope for the future we'll be able to have a conversations
 - i. We hosted 2 examens, seemed to be going well.
 - ii. Now we're doing more academic presentations, there are more concerns about bias, we don't tell faculty what to present, they have academic freedom, you don't have to go to the presentation, just because you don't like it doesn't mean we don't sponsor it.
 - iii. Bias incident reports, things being said in residence halls, they all feel a great anxiety, they all don't feel safe right now, working with mission and ministry to help them feel safe.
 - iv. We look at social media posts for hate speech or death threats, we regularly do this.

- v. We do not have a free speech policy, we are interested in putting a stake in the ground, without a policy, we have to look at things on case-by-case basis, could lead to inconsistency.
 - vi. I can send the list of who is on that community to write this policy.
 - vii. We don't have any violence, so far, we've been lucky.
 - viii. We also didn't have a president resign because of a senate hearing.
 - ix. This isn't on our timeline; we need to know when students and employees are ready to have this conversation.
 - x. There are requests to meet with the president, he's met with Muslim students and Jewish students and rabbis, lots of pressure to take a hardline stance one way or another.
 - xi. The biggest concern is safety, all events are open to the public, can't control who attends. Standard practice in planning when students reserve spaces, we let them know they have the option of having MUPD present in uniform or not.
 - xii. There will be policies around faculty and staff events as well.
 - xiii. We will look at the events that are scheduled and plan to go to events, we can't go to every event, we split up who goes to what so we can be present at events.
- e. Title IX
- i. We've expanding Title IX, it will also focus on students' civil rights, we'll be looking at bias incidences, hate crimes, etc.
 - ii. It's more explicit that we are guardians of students' civil rights.
 - iii. Antisemitism and islamophobia, being more intentional about addressing this, comes from the federal government-Dear Colleague letter.
 - iv. Still outlining that process
- f. Bias incidences are still coming, not heavier than this point last year, about the same volume and level of severity.
- i. Faculty being clumsy in classroom with language.
 - ii. Rare that staff are in these incidences-thank you!
- g. Different types of work
- i. Middle east events have made me want to work more to give tools to have difficult conversations, we don't have a lot of tools.
 - ii. There should be centralized places on campus where people can access these resources, more relational and Ignatian approaches to conflict.
 - iii. Needed during this time of polarization and conflict.
 - iv. You'll be hearing more about this after the gift of time.
- h. Strategic plan
- i. Now we are talking about who should be on the implementation team.
 - ii. DEI and mission and ministry will be core to that process.
- i. Any questions?
- i. Kirsten: Glad to hear staff aren't the problem, what can we do to actively support the work of your office?
 - 1. Dr. Navia: Keep not causing trouble. Check in with your students. When I think about the middle east conflict, you can build trust by asking. You can send students to me, warm handoff, walk students over. You can also engage the counseling center-what are signs we should be concerned? Keep looking out for each other, people might feel tense with the budget cuts. My office will have to make cuts too, you are not alone. I used to work in UW system, we've had budgets cuts in that area too. Students are going to feel this, but we can help mitigate it.

- ii. Tina: The students that are here who can't go home, what are we doing for these students?
 - 1. Dr. Navia: We can only do things when we know about them. Let us know about those students so we can help them.
 - 2. Karli: Let's touch base because many of our international students don't have a place to go during the break.
- iii. John: What's going on in the UW system?
 - 1. Too much legislative oversight and intrusion, the legislature thinks investing in DEI is a waste of money and is a mechanism of bias. Larger narrative that identifies DEI as anti-conservative and an affront to education. Last couple of days, they voted to pull the whole systems out of merit pay, no raises because UW system wouldn't fire DEI roles. Yesterday, there was a compromise, the UW system would eliminate a certain number of positions and programming to reinstate raises. Board of regents still needs to vote. Don't know how the system will move forward. 14 main colleges, 26 constellation campuses. The constellation campuses are being closed, there will be a smaller UW system, not good for the state, reduces access to education.
- j. Reach out if you have any questions!

USS Officer Reports

Secretary: Lizzy Machado

- 1. November minutes approved.

Treasurer: Amber Jensen

- 1. Nothing to report.

Vice Chair: Kirsten Boeh

- 1. As we go into the colder weather, updated version of severe weather closure policy. The idea of the traditional snow day doesn't exist anymore, general operations can occur remotely. Not all units can or need to work from home. The expectations for snow days should have been communicated by supervisors. Talk with your supervisor about whether or not you are capable of working from home. If you need to take care of kids or can't work from home, you need to take a vacation or personal day. Reschedule important meetings so everyone who was invited can be involved.
- 2. Latrice-parking glitch, whose fault is that? Should that burden be on the employee?
 - a. Calley-Joel is aware of the problem and gathering information. The process has been fixed. There are some options for making the repayment. To not expect people to pay while other people have been paying seems unfair, they are working with people on repayment plans. 70-80 people not being charged for parking for a few months to several years. Contact parking services, grad students can contact the grad school.
 - b. Kirsten-not a happy thing, there is an expectation that if the university mistakenly benefits from an employee, the university needs to right that inequity, vice versa, if an employee mistakenly benefits from an employer, they need to right that as well.

Chair: Calley Hostad

- 1. We met with Joel P about the budget deficit.
 - a. Inflation is a large piece, we're in the 4th year of the post covid class-these are the smallest classes since the 90s, we are getting less money from tuition (50% of our

budget). We are not cutting wages, retirement, or people. Jobs are not being eliminated, if people retire, those lines might not be renewed. More information should be coming from the heads of your departments. Joel has offered to come back to the staff senate, do we want to invite him back?

- b. Will there be any furloughs?
 - i. Calley will ask Joel.
 - c. What about the contingency fund? We knew about all of these causes, why didn't we anticipate this and where did the 12 million contingency money go?
 - d. Latrice-my issue is we're being told to smile, we lose great staff because we aren't competitive with salaries, how do we stay optimistic? This had to have been an issue when he presented, why didn't he tell us then? At what point do we get accountability at the top? How are you supposed to build trust and uplift staff when we aren't given this information and we're being dinged for parking. We wanted more transparency earlier, it could have been game changing, it's hard to make these changes at the last minute.
 - e. Maria-the news is really conflicting and confusing.
 - f. Sarah-Joel was so positive, and I was confused, if everything is so good, then why are so many people unhappy.
 - g. Karli-I've heard from across campus, people are afraid to ask questions because they don't want to lose their jobs.
 - i. We could create an anonymous form for staff to provide feedback.
 - h. Yes, invite Joel back for a discussion, not a presentation.
 - i. Molly- my role on the committee, budget planning for FY24 took place last year, they talked about all these factors, where did this go sideways? Could we also invite someone else? Ian Gonsalves?
2. Calley-At Joel's level, he might not understand what we're dealing with. How can we explain to him how this is impacting our day-to-day roles?
 3. Sarah-I feel like he knows that. He knows this is on our minds, we've brought up staff compensation before.
 4. Steve gets the questions ahead of time and give him those questions so he can think about them and get those answers. Lump the questions together in themes so it's easier for Joel. We want job security, appreciation and a sense that we're moving in the right direction.
 5. Kirsten-why do we want to know particular pieces of information? We should clarify how data and answers affect trust.
 6. Amber-instead of thinking about everything in terms of compensation, can we talk about how we can cut costs in other areas. What are the other solutions and where can this come from?
 7. Jane-reach out to us if you have any questions about your suppliers.
 8. Calley-will ask about Joel's availability for the January meeting. We could also do something outside of our regular meeting time.

Subcommittee Reports/Comments

Bylaws: Jack Bartelt

9. We will be voting in January on proposed changes to the bylaws.

Communication: Dwayne Burtin

1. No updates

Nominations and Elections: Robin Cork

1. No updates

Service: Maria Cooper

1. Christmas giving tree ended yesterday. We had 109 people give 250 gifts, 100% returns. Claudia started a mini tree in her office, this went so well!

Staff Outreach: Robin Cork/John Sweeney

2. If anyone wants to join that night, you are invited! 2nd/3rd shift staff meal, January 11th @ 9pm. Anyone interested in attending?

Work Environment: Kirsten Boeh

1. See vice chair report

External Facing Committee Reps

Cyber Security-Sherri Lex

1. No updates

MUPD Board-Chris Bartolone

1. No updates

Safety Task Force-Latrice Harris-Collins

1. No updates

Staff Compensation-Carol Trecek

1. No updates

Strategic Planning-Calley Hostad

1. No updates

University Academic Senate-Karli Webster

1. No updates

UFPRC-Molly Eldridge

1. No updates

New Business/Discussion:

The meeting adjourned at 12:48pm.