



Salisbury University – Staff Senate
Thursday, February 10, 2022
VIRTUAL MEETING

Minutes

Members in attendance: Vanessa Collins, Lisa Gray, Jennifer Ellis, Joe Benyish, Tabitha Pilchard, Amy Waters, Steven Blankenship, Matthew Hill, Paul Gasior, Jessica Scott, Sara Heim, Candace Henry

Absent:

Executive Staff: Eli Modlin, Dr. Janet Wormack, Dr. Chuck Wight

Vanessa Collins, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:02 am.

I. Eli Modlin

a. *COVID Update and information sharing on general staff-related issues*

- i. First week of testing averaged 40-50 positive cases per day; now averaging under 2-3.
- ii. New event guidance will be released this week, including remote options for larger events and those that have food.
- iii. Will be relaxing some mask requirements in classrooms; however, will continue to require the KN95 masks due to the efficacy of the masks.
- iv. 2nd box of KN95s for campus community will be available on Monday; N95 fittings will also be available again.
- v. Return tests need to be completed by Friday, Feb. 11th in order to keep campus access.
- vi. COVID testing available for anyone in the campus community, regardless of vaccination status. Appointments are available online.
- vii. Isolation terms will continue to be 10 days, due to the communal living environment on campus, and having individuals that are continuing to test positive after 5 days.
- viii. Individuals that are showing a “not cleared” status could be not cleared due to the information transfer from GullNet to the new medical records system. This can be corrected by contacting Campus Health to determine the specific issue; info from the individual may be necessary.
- ix. Those that received the Moderna booster may be receiving calls from the MD Dept. of Health with reminders to get their booster. This is an issue with the way that the state is recording this information and is being worked on. Once the state corrects their issue, those calls should stop.

II. Reports

a. *Dr. Janet Wormack*

- i. February is Black History Month; everyone encouraged to recognize the rich history of African American stories on the Eastern Shore.
 1. SU grad student has created a walking tour of downtown Salisbury to recognize historical sites important in African American history.
- ii. First Friday of February was Go Red for Women day to recognize women’s heart health.
- iii. Human Resources
 1. Working on rolling out the Distinguished Staff awards for retired staff recognition that was recommended by Staff Senate.
 2. Will also be convening Wellness committee in March; hope to work on contracting mental health expert for employees as one of its initiatives.

3. Developing supervisor toolkit for onboarding, as well as other tools on website to provide a better onboarding experience.
 4. Working on Service Awards celebration in April to recognize staff achievements.
 5. Friday with the Flock newsletter now going out to all employees with wellness tips.
- iv. Submitted Staff Senate recommendations are currently being reviewed. Thanked Staff Senate for expressing staff concerns with the communication regarding campus closings that happened in December/January. Working on summit in the fall that will include walking through the campus closing procedures with multiple departments as to what is communicated to whom and how, especially with new telework procedures that have been implemented since COVID.
 - v. State language used in paystubs to apply the COLA and merit increases caused some confusion, even though the pay did calculate correctly. Requested that additional information be released in explanation of how it was distributed to close the communication gap between Payroll and employees.
 - vi. Spring enrollment is down approximately 8.2%; transfers/continuing students seem to be declining. Determining how to figure out how to make up \$14.7 million decrease in budget for next year and projected decline in enrollment; will most likely be implementing a 2% tuition increase, as well as a fee increase. Divisions should be discussing the efficiency of their departments and what can be done to adjust their budgetary requirements.
- b. *CUSS Update – Paul*
- i. Proposal to create a time for reflection in March regarding the COVID pandemic.
 - ii. BOR Awards nominations due tomorrow.
 - iii. Duplication of fees for employees taking classes was addressed.
 1. Since these fees are not standard across institutions, may suggest recommendation regarding this issues. CUSS previously requested lists of fees from each institution.
- c. *Dr. Chuck Wight*
- i. Two searches for Assistant Director positions within ODI currently ongoing.
 - ii. Anti-Racism Summit was held last week with discussion by Dr. Stoval regarding critical race theory. Proud that we were able to have this conversation, since there are schools within the country where these discussions are illegal in those institutions.
 - iii. Had meeting with leaders within University System of Maryland regarding starting to gradually relax restrictions regarding COVID, starting with no longer requiring teachers/presenters to wear masks while continuing to social distance. While not recommending to discontinue all precautions at once, it is important to start the process of “unwinding” some of the regulations that have been put in place.

III. Old Business

a. *Standing Committees - Updates*

- i. Human Resources: Jessica/Steve
 1. Met with Christine Benoit; discussed salary compression, onboarding, supervisor training, and work-from-home policy consistency. Staff Handbook has been updated and is continuing to be reviewed. Will be given to Staff Senate for review once completed.
 2. Plan for “Welcome from SU Staff Senate” to new hires
 - a. Have created new hire checkbook for both employees & supervisors.
 - b. New AVP, Lisa Lepore, would like to make orientation & campus morale a priority. Looking into re-establish the Wellness committee that was previously on campus.
 - c. Would like to identify individuals in different roles on campus that might be able to be touchstones for new employees.
 - d. Will invite Lisa & Christine to March meeting to introduce AVP and discuss HR concerns in more detail.

- ii. Consortium Committees
 - 1. Consortium Coordinating Committee: Vanessa
 - a. No updates
 - 2. Cultural Diversity & Inclusion Consortium Committee: Joe/Jennifer
 - a. Have not met since last Staff Senate meeting
- iii. Communications: Snack & Chat update – Jennifer
 - 1. March’s meeting will be from the DRC regarding accessibility.
 - 2. Will be contacting HR for a future meeting regarding retirement benefits.
- b. *Current/Pending Recommendation Status*
 - i. Spring Break Admin Leave – Joe
 - 1. Currently under review with HR & Dr. Wormack.
 - ii. Campus Closure & Telework Policy – Steve/Vanessa
 - 1. Improvements were already made in January closure announcements; additional improvements being worked on.
 - iii. Staff Sabbatical for professional development, special projects, etc. – Candace
 - 1. Working on information found from Academy to Innovate regarding the differences between faculty & staff sabbaticals to develop our policies and create a template for submission.
- c. *BOR Award nominations update – Lisa*
 - i. Received 11 submissions; are putting forward 6 for nomination. Are now awaiting President’s approval to submit to CUSS.
 - ii. Lisa recommended changing deadline for submissions to mid-October to provide more time for the completion of the packets.
- d. *Discuss having a Staff Senate liaison to NCAAP and other student groups (per discussion from Jan meeting with NAACP chapter president Dorian Rogers)*
 - i. Recommended that Staff Senate should not have a specific liaison for student groups, as the Staff Senate’s goal is to advocate for staff. We can maintain an open door policy and encourage communication regarding future partnership opportunities, as well as being a source of accurate information regarding issues pertaining to staff or staff services.
- e. *Update on redesign of Staff Senate website – Bella*
 - i. New Recommendations section of website with information on submitted Staff Senate Recommendations for the current year, along with responses received from administration once they are received.
 - 1. Documents for the recommendations & responses are linked in the sections for staff to read.
 - 2. Updates will be made to the site as new Recommendations are made and/or responses are received.
 - ii. Older Minutes & Snack-and-Chat information have been archived to clean up website and make it easier to navigate. Only current semester info will be listed on the main page.
 - iii. Suggestion Box now permanently linked on main page. New Qualtrics form currently being worked on to update how the suggestion submission pages looks.
 - iv. Requested that Jessica speak with HR regarding historical context of why Staff Senate webpage is not linked on the University Employees pages. Once that information is received, will follow up with Dr. Wormack about the issue.

IV. New Business

- a. *New Recommendation Proposals/Ideas*
 - i. Vanessa working on recommendation for school fees that she will distribute once completed.
 - ii. Considering development of recommendation to get representation for the review for Employee of the Month.

b. Possible Staff Town Hall

- i. CUSS recommended hosting a Staff Town Hall or create an open space to check in with staff and see how they are doing/feeling two years into the pandemic. Will discuss in a future meeting.

c. Staff Senate Suggestion Box

- i. No suggestions received

V. Approval of the January Meeting Minutes

- a. Motion to approve: Steve Blankenship
- b. Second: Tabitha Pilchard

VI. Adjournment

- a. Next Meeting – March 10, AC401 GAC Boardroom with virtual option