

**The University of Scranton ~ Staff Senate
Para-Professional & Professional Roundtable Discussion
March 11, 2014 – Brennan Hall 228**

Ms. Meg Cullen-Brown began the program at 10:35 am
21 people were in attendance

1. Welcome

- Agenda and Notes from October Roundtable were distributed

2. Reminder about Upcoming Nominations and Election for Staff Senate

- Everyone is encouraged to participate in submitting nominations and voting. You should have received an email from Donna Rupp calling for nominations to be submitted by March 20, 2014. Faculty and administrators are not eligible.
 - Clerical constituency group has 5 seats plus 2 alternates open
 - MTTP constituency group has 4 seats plus 2 alternates open
 - Paraprofessional/Professional constituency group 6 seats plus 2 alternates open
- Online voting will take place from April 2, 2014 through April 9, 2014. Senators serve two year terms and must attend monthly meetings and actively participate in at least one committee. Next year, the Staff Senate President is Mr. Joseph Wetherell. It was suggested that Meg restate the mission of the staff senate and encourage people to self-nominate for the upcoming staff senate elections. Meg Cullen Brown stated the mission and mentioned current responsibilities of Staff Senate. Patti Tetreault serves as liaison to the Staff Senate. There are 27 staff senators and 6 alternates.

3. Review Topics from October 2013 Roundtable Discussion and Updates

- Best Practices Workshop for Administrative Assistants. This request for administrative assistant training was forwarded to Human Resources
- Banking of and Donation of Sick Time. While employees can access extended leave benefits, staff are still calling for this topic to be explored further. An ad hoc committee may be set up in June following the seating of the new senators and officers. It was stated that one particular staff could have benefitted from donation of sick time so this issue should be looked at further. Someone asked about donating vacation time. Meg said that while the original request was for the donation of sick time, the donation of vacation time can be part of the same conversation
- Staff Participation in Wellness Activities. Another topic Staff Senate is addressing is the use of wellness leave time. An Ad hoc committee was set up and currently is working on this topic to address the uneven distribution of access to wellness events and activities. Tim Barrett is chairing this committee and Cathy Mascelli, who handles employee wellness activities, has been included in committee conversations. The goal is to provide recommendations that can be helpful to managers with approval of staff's participation in wellness activities
- Partner Benefits. This topic has been referred to Human Resources and will be tabled for Staff Senate until next year. There is a possibility that an ad hoc committee will be created to do research and to provide information and suggestions that can be helpful for the

decision makers. It is also significant to mention that federal government guidelines will probably guide implementation of partner benefits for employers in the future.

- Vice Presidents' Informational Forums. Meg met with Father Quinn in November when they discussed Staff Senate's proposal for Communication/Informational Forums. He was to discuss this with the Cabinet but then the University's status with Middle States became the priority. Recently, Meg met with Bobby Davis who stated the President and Vice Presidents would participate in this initiative. The tentative plan was for four presentations in the fall and then four to be held in the spring, each about 15 minutes in length but including time for questions. This would improve communication between divisions which was identified as priority from the Middle States Review. The hope is that we will have at least one speaker before this semester ends, preferably Ed Steinmetz, Vice President of Finance
- Tuition Benefit Differences Between Staff and Faculty. Tuition benefits and the inequalities between staff and faculty is an issue that Father Quinn has brought to the Cabinet. Bobby Davis said the tuition benefits have changed to become more equitable among staff. Faculty members have been successful at negotiating other tuition benefits as part of their teaching contracts. (Ex: three scholarships at Scranton Preparatory School for children of faculty members). Specific differences also include faculty having access to CIC and FACHEX schools for their children. Mary Clare Brill has done research on this topic and reports that The University of Scranton is the only Jesuit college/university with this disparity. Meg stated that while there may be justifiable reasons for the differences in these tuition benefits, it warrants a discussion. Someone asked about the possibility of a benefit where if someone has reached Pro Deo status and retires, their children can still have the tuition benefit for their college education

4. Topics Solicited from Professional and Paraprofessional Staff for This Roundtable Discussion

- Mission Time Policy Update
Human Resources is looking at this because it is not allowed and accessed equitably. Two participants asked that the discussion clarify what constitutes mission leave and if it can be taken in various time increments. Another participant said it should be clearly defined so we could understand why some requests are approved and others are not. Meg will share these suggestions with Patti Tetreault, Interim Vice President of Human Resources

5. Fall 2014 Roundtable Event/Improving Roundtable Discussions

- Effectiveness of Roundtable Discussions. A suggestion was made that it may be easier for people to attend if these discussions were held during lunchtime. Another person asked if we can post the agenda ahead of time. It was stated that few people submit agenda items. Meg stressed that we need staff feedback especially in light of the fact the lack of communication was identified as a major concern from the Middle States review. It was felt that in the past, the Speak Out Sessions were not effective because while people felt free to speak they were frustrated with how slowly answers came back to them. Roundtable discussions take place for each constituency group so that people will feel comfortably sharing their thoughts without concern about how their supervisors would react. Meg asked if a survey would be a better way to get staff feedback. One suggestion was that time be devoted to each constituency group to meet during Wellness Day. Meg said we can ask Cathy Mascelli. Janice Winslow said she chairs the committee and they

have worked hard to keep its focus on wellness. She will bring it to the committee. Meg said it can be phrased or framed in a way related to wellness and make attending these roundtables during Wellness Day voluntary.

Other Issues Raised/Discussed

- Ombudsman Ad-hoc Committee. An ombudsman position was recommended following a campus climate survey. A committee was formed by Father Pilarz to review the recommendations from this survey. There were no strong recommendations. The current ad-hoc committee is working on a report with a historical perspective and with information about what other universities offer in terms of ombudsman positions. Someone stated while he sees the University of Scranton as a great place to work, he understands the Committee of the Status of Women is calling for another climate study. Meg stated that the second climate survey done in 2007 showed an improvement the institution from the initial climate survey results. Specific offices were identified as needing changes and the changes were made. The question posed was, “Is there a way to measure climate each year rather than periodically.” Meg also added that Staff Senate was directly involved in the issue regarding the change of time for MTTP shifts. Open communication proved to be effective as those struggling with the change in shift times spoke with managers and were able to reach an agreement. We have to challenge people to communicate clearer while also taking ownership of their concerns.
- Staff Member in Need. Therese Kurilla's daughter, Ava, has cancer. Staff Senate and her office, Research Sponsored Programs, are supporting a fundraiser to buy \$5 wrist bands to support the family. Jamie Hayes is the contact person and she can be reached at 941-6353.

Submitted Betty Rozelle