

TO: Staff Senate  
FROM: Pauline Palko  
DATE: September 3, 2014  
SUBJECT: Minutes of August 13, 2014 Meeting

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In attendance: Ms. Cherra, Ms. Mecadon, Ms. Barrett Notarianni, Ms. Palko, Ms. Edwards, Mr. Pilger, Mr. Sakowski, Mr. SanMartin, Ms. Shimsky, Ms. Bevacqua, Mr. Casabona, Ms. Driscoll-McNulty, Ms. Freeman, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Oakey, Mr. Porter, Mr. Sheehan, Jr. Wetherell,

Not in attendance: Ms. Rupp, Ms. Tucker, Ms. Klein, Ms. Kocis, Ms. Barnoski, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Fedoryk, Mr. Roginski, Mr. Davitt, Mr. Hallock, Ms. Butler, Ms. Hollingshead, Ms. Vita.

**Welcome:**

- Mr. Wetherell called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. in the PNC Bank Board Room, Brennan Hall
- Mr. Wetherell offered the opening prayer in lieu of the absent Mr. Roginski
- Attendance was checked and it was agreed that there was quorum for voting purposes
- Mr. Wetherell requested a volunteer for the August meeting prayer; Mr. Sheehan came forward

**Review of July meeting minutes:**

A note was made to correct the spelling of MOOCS; motion was made by Mr. Wetherell to accept the minutes. Mr. SanMartin seconded the motion.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Mr. Wetherell asked that in the interest of time, the meeting adjourn prior to Roundtable Breakout Sessions, and added the category Items from the Floor. A motion was made by Mr. Casabona to accept the agenda, Ms. Edwards seconded the motion

**Liaison Report:**

- Mr. Wetherell read a note sent to him by the absent Ms. Tetreault. Note indicated strong incoming class numbers and that the campus is busy preparing for Move-In Weekend August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**President's Report:**

- Presidential Forums — Mr. Wetherell has not yet made contact with Bobby Davis regarding responsibility for the event planning details between Staff Senate and the President's Office.

- For those new to Staff Senate Mr. Wetherell relayed the purpose of the Presidential Forums is University-wide communication; Staff Senate began coordination efforts last year; will host a forum open to the University community and at which Fr. Quinn is present, and invite in turn each Divisional Vice President or Vice Provost to present to the University Community the current focus, challenge or projects of each division in an effort to improve correct campus wide dissemination of information, address concerns, and rumors, and answer questions.
- Ms. Tetreault requested (through e-mail to Mr. Wetherell) suggestions for speakers for a fall forum to present to the cabinet. Senate confirmed with no new suggestions the recommendations from last meeting (Dr. Boomgaarden, Provost and Mr. Steinmetz, VP Finance).

#### **Budget Guidance from Senate VP:**

- Each committee chair was sent the committee's last year's budget for reference.
- Committee chairs are asked to review their intended projects as if funds are unlimited, send plans for dollars requested, hopeful projects, events and goals and their anticipated costs, and forward their wish lists, ideas, and estimated costs to Ms. Hollingshead. Executive Committee will do their best to accommodate requests. Helps us plan for next year.
- Ms. Freeman said she had not yet been able to receive her committee's input. Mr. Wetherell responded that committees could discuss for another month, but asked that any updates be sent to Ms. Hollingshead.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Wellness Report-** Mr. Wetherell reported on behalf of Mr. Barrett (absent) that the ad-hoc wellness committee continues working with Cathy Mascelli and is hoping to have the report completed in September and have Cathy Mascelli attend the Staff Senate meeting. Purpose of report is to illuminate discrepancies across departments regarding equitable participation in wellness activities.

- Mr. Sakowski (committee member) reported that the committee has been reaching out to local and Jesuit colleges as well as Federal and State institutions for information on their policies regarding wellness programs but is not getting much response locally. Some have policies but don't really abide by them. Information not coming back well. If you know of any institution or corporation that has a good program and might be worth talking to, please contact Mr. Barrett with that information.
- Ms. Edwards inquired, regarding wellness, if retirees are permitted to keep their Royal Card use of the fitness center, and if regulations regarding such are in the employee handbook.

- Mr. Sakowski stated his belief that wellness privileges were tied to ProDeo status, and that retirees may need to request a special Royal card.
- Ms. Cherra believed that the retiree's Royal card has to be coded according to years of service
- Ms. Barrett (HR) will look into it and report back.
- Ms. Freeman searched the current Staff & Administrator's Handbook on her iPad and stated that a table on page 21 of the current Staff and Administrator's Handbook specifies that retirees retain fitness center privileges with no mention of Pro Deo status as a requirement.

**Items for Discussion —Fairfield Article:**

- Mr. Murphy read a motion suggesting that that an ad-hoc committee be formed to research and develop a report to determine if the University of Scranton could develop a program similar to *Fairfield 2020* to better position the University to respond to economic and demographic changes emerging in the higher education environment and asked for input.
  - Mr. Casabona stated that the Fairfield example was too specific to Fairfield and that the University should look at educational trends separate from Fairfield's intentions.
  - Mr. Wetherell said (as background) that in June the Senate had discussed money saving suggestions to Finance. Senate thought too piece-meal; Mr. Murphy suggested it would be more beneficial to look at the bigger picture.
  - Ms. Palko suggested adding "educational changes" to the motion; how we deliver education.
  - Mr. Sheehan asked if the committee's suggestions would be a response to the anxiety, uncertainty, raised by staff members losing their jobs.
  - Mr. Murphy said this was coming from the position of the Senate wanting to help the University stay current and viable. The purpose of doing our homework on it is so that we're knowledgeable and can look at what other institutions are doing to address these same concerns. If the committee finds some strategies elsewhere that the Senate believe might be beneficial to The University of Scranton, we can vote to suggest it to the administration.
  - Mr. Wetherell confirmed a quorum was present.
  - Mr. Murphy made a motion to vote on forming an ad-hoc committee
  - Mr. San Martin seconded
  - Mr. Murphy read the motion:
    - That the Staff Senate create an ad-hoc committee to research and develop a report to determine if the University of Scranton could develop a program which goals are to position the University to respond more nimbly to the economic, demographic, and educational changes that are now emerging in the new higher education environment.

- Mr. Wetherell called for a vote: motion unanimously approved.

### **Ombuds Report:**

- Mr. Wetherell asked the senate for recommendations on who to send the report to next UGC for all three senates to review, and then have them decide if it should go to the President's Cabinet.
- Mr. Murphy stated the report contained historical information on the subject that would be valuable to upper leadership and employees for answering questions as it would help them better understand the situation.
- Mr. Murphy read a motion regarding the report: "That Staff Senate forward the final Ombudsman report to the University Governance Council, UGC for review. And that the staff senate is requesting the report be forwarded to the President's Cabinet for review following UGC review and discussion."
- Mr. Sakowski asked if we should include suggestions indicating what we want UGC to do with the report.
- Mr. Wetherell responded that we are asking the UGC to review and discuss with the hope that the UGC would form a recommendation to then forward the report to the President's Cabinet.
- Mr. Oakey asked if the report should be sent to our constituents for recommendations
- Mr. Murphy stated that as we represent our constituency, our ultimate goal would be to put it out there for everyone, but we are elected to do the work for them
- Mr. Sakowski indicated that releasing it to everyone would only activate more questions and confusion and opined that our constituents would favor having another level of representation such as an ombudsman
- Mr. Murphy stated the intent of the report is not to recommend or not recommend having an ombuds, it was instead an investigation into the facts around the issue at the University.
- Mr. Wetherell stated his misgivings as to sending it on without rank and file knowing about it.
- Mr. Sheehan expressed his concern that staff have a bigger stake in having or not having an ombudsman than faculty.
- Mr. Wetherell agreed on the basis that staff are not represented by a union.
- Mr. Sheehan asked if the University already had offices performing ombuds-like functions.
- Ms. Palko stated all that information is in the report along with the recommendations of the committee for the University to consider. Ms. Palko read them from page 12:
  - "More clearly defined informal complaint procedures be developed for staff;
  - Policies and procedures for adjunct faculty be clearly articulated and communicated;

- Greater transparency of how ombuds responsibilities are fulfilled at the University of Scranton and by whom, including reporting for the purpose of planning and decision making;
- Offices managing ombuds functions provide open assurances that confidential, independent and impartial assistance is available;
- Communication from the offices/groups responsible for ombuds functions should be ongoing, accessible and consistent for all constituents.”
- Ms. Notarrianni suggested sending an email to notify the staff that this is what the Senate has been working on, send a status update and note that the Senate wanted to forward to UGC.
- Mr. Sakowski stated that we would have to include the report along with any status update.
- Mr. San Martin asked how many pages the report contained and admitted that he had not read the report. He added that sending the report was a good idea but doubted that many would read it due to the length of the report.
- Mr. Sakowski responded that twelve pages was not a lot to read.
- Mr. Casabona asked for a summary of the report be sent to the Staff
- Mr. Murphy stated that government process doesn't work that way, that we decide what level the report is distributed to
- Mr. Oakey interjected that the Ombuds topic has been talked about for twenty years and was important enough to be offered to the entire staff in some way either through a link or a request of a pdf to give them the option of reviewing it.
- Mr. Murphy offered that the report was sent to all Senators but was not limited to all senators. Senators were free to distribute to constituents. Mr. Murphy stated he was hoping for a robust discussion at this meeting because the topic has been on the agenda the last two meetings and it didn't happen. He added that the Democratic process takes time and he wasn't insisting on a vote today. He proposed that the report be added to the agenda of the next meeting and that all senators read it and know what it actually contains and recommends and be prepared to discuss at the September meeting.
- Ms. Bevacqua asked if the ombuds report could be tied to the roundtables meetings and ask for feedback in that manner.
- Mr. Sakowski responded that he didn't think it was the place unless you needed to fill time.
- Mr. Wetherell stated that this topic is too dangerous to take lightly and suggested that he was afraid that people would perceive that the Staff Senate was going to push for the hire of an Ombudsman. He will put the topic on hold till next month and asked that all senators read it and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting. He suggested that if the senate decides to forward it on that the Senate put together a forwarding summary paragraph that the Senate will discuss and vote on next meeting (if it's decided to pass it on).

- Mr. Bevacqua asked if it was on the website.
- Mr. Casabona stated that he would put it on there and confirmed with Ms. Palko that it was sent to all senators including new senators and alternates.
- Mr. Murphy cautioned that posting the report on the website before the senate discusses it and decides what they want to do with it could lead to more confusion or misrepresent the senate. This whole body has to support the report before it's posted and offered that it could be a good roundtable topic.
- Mr. Wetherell stated that we would wait until after the next meeting before posting to the website.
- Mr. Murphy cautioned against rushing a decision.
- Mr. Sakowski asked that links and reminders be sent again prior to the next meeting.
- Ms. Bevacqua asked if comments could be submitted to Mr. Wetherell prior to the meeting to make him aware of what might be discussed.
- Mr. Wetherell stated that comments prior to the meeting would be appreciated.
- Mr. Casabona asked if there is a single on-line area to post documents and then comment on it or have a discussion thread stating that there are tools available to do so and thought it would be helpful.
- Mr. Murphy stated that there was a tool a few years ago but it went away and didn't seem necessary.
- Mr. Casabona responded that it would be more organized than emailing and that
- Mr. Sakowski said that many people didn't like reading on-line especially because this is a side-line to our usual work and many printed it out, take it with them and read and comment on the document whenever/wherever they have time, and to have to transfer comments to a discussion thread would take more time. Good option to have but wondered how much it would really be used.
- Mr. Murphy stated that this review is not to change the report but to decide who to pass the report on to.

### **Open Items from the Floor**

- Mr. Wetherell announced that in the interest of saving funds, cookie and beverage leftovers would be reviewed after each meeting for the next couple of meetings and may be reduced.
  - Suggestions were made by Mr. Oakey, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. SanMartin on sustainable and healthy catering options, such as ordering pitchers of water and bottles of soda vs. bottles and cans, and cutting back on cookies and adding fruit. Mr. Murphy also mentioned that his office receives many complaints regarding sustainability and catering and that he is working on making catering more sustainable. Mr. Murphy stated that going forward he would like to make a presentation to the Staff Senate on sustainability on campus.

- Request for MTTP Senate Representative to sit on University Committee on the Status of Women—Ms. Edwards volunteered.
- Mr. Wetherell reminded everyone that Anitra McShea, Vice Provost of Student Formation & Campus Life has asked for a senator to serve on the search committee for an Executive Director of Campus Ministry. Please send Donna Rupp a brief note explaining your interest by Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. The search committee will convene shortly thereafter.
  - Mr. Murphy encouraged senators to volunteer as it's an interesting opportunity to learn how the university hires for these higher level positions.
  - Mr. SanMartin asked if it was possible to switch committees.
  - Mr. Murphy responded that search committees are temporary commitments.
  - Mr. Wetherell advised Mr. SanMartin to ask his supervisor for permission to switch committees and/or serve on the search committee.
- Mr. Murphy updated the senate regarding one-way phone communication to Public Safety in the event of a dangerous situation in an office. Mr. Murphy reports from Lisa Notarianni that there is a significant cost associated with programming the phones this way, though Mr. Murphy is not sure why given we have software and equipment. As an example: a 2500 license bundle would cost \$55,000 to set up and another \$12,000 annually as a maintenance fee.
- Mr. Sakowski stated he still has questions for Lisa and would continue to look into it. Can still program a button on the phone to go to Public Safety but it would be a two-way open line. What they are looking to program extra information to Public Safety, PS doesn't talk back but line is open so they can hear what's going on. A two-way open button would be an improvement but wouldn't give us the options we were looking for to increase safety when confronted by someone in your office.
- Mr. Wetherell stated that this was not necessarily a Senate project but that some senators were researching it to pass the information along to the University Safety Committee and will continue to pass information on the Safety Committee
- Mr. Wetherell noted the time and stated that there was not enough time or enough people to have the roundtable planning sessions.
- Motion to adjourn, Ms. Freeman; seconded Mr. Murphy
- Meeting adjourned at 11:35am

Mr. Murphy put forth a motion to adjourn; Mr. Roginski seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.