

TO: Staff Senate  
FROM: Kristi Klien  
DATE: June 18, 2025  
SUBJECT: Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

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**In Attendance:** Jill Eidenberg, Lucy Grissinger, Denise Kuzma, Traci Vennie, Melissa Eckenrode, Kristi Klien, Gerianne Barber, Janice Mecadon, Melinda Finnerty, Shawn Beistline, Peggy Doolittle, Rose Ann Jubinski, Joseph Medina, Patti Tetreault, Daniela Teneva, Hollie Roscioli, Autumn Forgione, Sybil Keris, Gina Butler, Melisa Gallo, Diane Collins Gilmore, Melissa Przewlocki, Shonna Emick, Raymond Kratz, Megan Sweeney, Bryn Schofield,

**Not in Attendance:** Brenda Clarke, Patricia Savitts, LeeAnn Toth, Kelly Cook, Bridget Hunter, Andrew Adryan, Alex Wasalinko, Bridget Judge, Brenda Amato, Jessica Hughes

**Welcome:** Kristi Klein called the meeting to order. Peggy Doolittle offered the opening prayer. Volunteer needed for opening prayer at the next meeting. The Land Acknowledgement Statement was read. Attendance was checked, and a quorum was met.

**Review of Agenda:** A motion was made to accept the agenda and minutes. The motion was seconded, and the agenda was approved.

#### **Fire Watch Program – Brian Loughney**

- **Purpose:** Developed to ensure safety during rare instances when fire alarm systems are down.
- **Frequency:** Expected to be needed only once a year or every 18 months.
- **Staffing:** University Police cannot always cover these shifts, so staff volunteers are being recruited.
- **Compensation:**
  - **Hourly staff:** Paid at their regular rate; overtime is time-and-a-half.
  - **Exempt/salaried staff:** Paid \$20/hour.
- **Training:** will be provided.
- **Equipment:** Includes radios, and in rare cases, whistles or megaphones (if acting as a manual fire alarm).
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Monitor buildings when alarms are offline.
  - Walk through areas to check for smoke, gas, or other hazards.
  - Report status to University Police.
  - Fire Watch Program – Volunteer Call
  - Purpose: To ensure building safety when fire alarm systems are temporarily offline.
  - Frequency: Rare—typically once a year or every 18 months.
  - Current Volunteers: Only 3 staff members have signed up so far, meaning long shifts (e.g., 8 hours each) if an incident occurs.
  - Need: More volunteers would reduce individual shift lengths and improve coverage.

- What Volunteers Will Do:
- Monitor buildings during fire alarm outages.
- Walk through buildings to check for smoke, gas, or hazards.
- Notify the University Police if the system comes back online.
- In extreme cases, act as a manual alarm (e.g., whistle, megaphone, knocking on doors).
- Compensation
- Hourly staff: Paid regular rate; overtime is time-and-a-half.
- Exempt/salaried staff: Paid \$20/hour.
- All hours are paid, even if the shift overlaps with regular work hours.
- Availability: Voluntary: You are *not* on-call 24/7.
- If you're unavailable (e.g., out of town), you're not obligated to respond.
- You'll be contacted only if you're on the list and available.
- How to Sign Up: Interested staff should email Human Resources (or the designated coordinator) to be added to the Fire Watch list.

### **Liaison Report: Patricia Tetreault**

**Pro Deo events** took place in both April and May.

- Celebrations were held for:
  - 31 employees with 10 years of service.
  - 16 employees with 20 years of service.
- The library signage will be updated to reflect the new 20-year honorees.
- Some awards remain unclaimed in the office. The team is working on contacting recipients, especially those in the 10-year group (likely not the 20-year group, as they are mostly faculty).

### **10-Year Awards**

- If any staff mention they haven't received their 10-year service award, HR has them available.
- Kim will be reaching out again to remind recipients to stop by and pick theirs

### **Board Meeting & Budget Approval**

- The annual budget was approved by the Board in early May.
- As a result, a Staff Voluntary Retirement Program was launched.

### **Staff Voluntary Retirement Program**

- Eligibility: 88 staff members were eligible.
- Participation: 32 elected to participate.
- Last Day of Work: July 25, with some extensions into August, September, and October for transition purposes.

### **Purpose & Impact**

- The program is a short-term investment for long-term savings.
- Savings are achieved by not replacing all vacated positions.
- A Resource Management Committee (made up of Cabinet members) will review requests to replace or restructure positions.
- Departments may:
  - Reassign work.
  - Eliminate outdated tasks.

- Operate more efficiently with fewer staff.

### **Historical Context**

- This is the fourth staff retirement offering:
- Previous programs occurred in 2011, 2015, and post-COVID.
- Each time, the expectation has been to restructure rather than refill positions.

### **Staff Concerns & Support**

- Patty emphasized her openness to speak with anyone who has concerns or questions about the retirement program or its implications.
- Staff are encouraged to reach out directly or refer others who may be feeling anxious or uncertain.

### **Farewell Gathering**

- A farewell event for retiring staff is being considered.
- Two options discussed:
  - Hold it in July: While timely, many people may be off campus.
  - Hold it in early fall: More people would be present, allowing for broader participation.
- Patty is seeking input from staff on which option feels more appropriate and meaningful.

### **Program Impact & Future Planning**

- There is no set target or magic number that needs to be met.
- No Current Plans for Cuts: There is *no mandate* to cut additional positions if a target isn't met.
- However: If departments request to retain all vacated positions, the program's cost-saving intent may not be realized, prompting further review.
- The Resource Management Committee will review all requests to refill or restructure positions.
- Some roles may be:
  - Not replaced.
  - Restructured.
  - Phased out, depending on departmental needs and strategic priorities.

### **Budget Pressures & Structural Deficit**

- The university is facing a structural deficit, meaning expenses exceed revenues.
- Past reliance on one-time solutions (or "levers") is no longer sustainable.
- The goal is to balance the budget and ideally create a small surplus for reinvestment.

### **Strategic Adjustments**

- The retirement program is one of several initiatives aimed at long-term financial health.
- Other efforts include:
  - Strategic enrollment planning
  - Technology investments
  - Operational efficiency reviews
- Departments are encouraged to rethink how work is done; what can be streamlined, restructured, or sunset.

### **Support & Transparency**

- Patty reiterated her commitment to transparency, support, and open dialogue.
- Staff are encouraged to continue sharing feedback and concerns, especially as the university navigates budget pressures and organizational changes.
- Patty is available to speak with any staff who have concerns or questions.

- She emphasized that decisions involving position restructuring are never taken lightly and are approached with care and compassion.
- Severance packages are considered for impacted staff when restructuring occurs.

#### **Staff Workload & Restructuring Concerns**

- Staff voiced concerns about increased workload due to retirements, especially in divisions where multiple long-tenured employees are leaving.
- Patty acknowledged that not all vacated positions can or should be eliminated, and that's why the Resource Management Committee exists—to evaluate what makes sense now and in the future.
- Some positions may be temporarily unfilled to capture turnover savings but could be posted later depending on departmental needs.

#### **Efficiency Through Technology & Process Review**

- Patty emphasized the need to invest in technology to reduce manual work and improve efficiency.
  - Example: HR still manually processes vacation/sick time rollovers and benefits data.
- The hope is that better systems will allow staff to focus on higher-impact work rather than repetitive tasks.

#### **Staffing Trends & Organizational Impact**

- The university has offered four staff retirement programs in under 15 years, each with the intent to reduce staffing levels.
- While some early reductions may have been manageable, the organization is already lean, and further reductions must be carefully considered.

#### **Leadership's Commitment**

- Staff are encouraged to communicate openly with leadership about workload concerns and operational needs.

#### **Divisional Restructuring & Promotions**

- Yes, restructuring may lead to promotional opportunities, depending on the division's needs and how work is redistributed.
- These decisions are division-specific, based on roles, responsibilities, and strategic priorities.

#### **Concerns About External Contracting**

- Staff raised concerns about high-cost external reviews and consulting contracts.
- Suggestion: Leverage internal expertise—faculty and staff with national/international credentials—before outsourcing.
- Patty agreed and will bring this feedback to Cabinet, emphasizing the need for accountability and cost-efficiency.

#### **New CFO Introduction**

- Steve Hitch is the new CFO, officially taking over after Tim Doyle's departure.
- Steve is described as approachable, candid, and enthusiastic about engaging with staff.
- Plans are in motion to introduce him to the Staff Senate and possibly have him present on financial matters.

#### **Provost & Associate Provost Searches**

- **Provost Search:**
  - The position profile is nearly finalized and will be posted by June 30.

- Koya Partners will begin recruitment over the summer.
- The search committee will reconvene in early September.

#### **Associate Provost Search:**

- First-round interviews will be completed by Friday.
- Finalists will visit campus between July 9–15.
- This role is critical as David Marks departs at the end of June.

#### **Faculty Contract Negotiations**

- The faculty contract expires on August 31.
- Negotiations are ongoing, with hopes for a smooth resolution before the deadline.

#### **Pro Deo Room & Service Medals**

- Medals recipient names are posted in the Pro Deo Room in the library.
- Staff shared appreciation for the personal and meaningful experience of receiving medals individually.

#### **Staff Handbook Tuition Remission Course Credit Clarification**

- Clarification was requested regarding lab and lecture combinations being counted as one course, even if registered separately.
- Patty will confirm with Beth and Gina to ensure credit limits are applied fairly and exemptions are considered when appropriate.

#### **Graduate-Level Tuition Benefits for Staff Dependents**

- The proposal was not approved for this year's budget.
- However, it is not off the table:
  - Father Marina and both Tim Doyle and new CFO Steve Hitch have expressed interest.
  - Patty has requested a formal written response for archival purposes.
  - She will also ask when it's appropriate to reintroduce the request for the next budget cycle.

#### **President's Report**

##### **Staff Senate Officer Elections**

- **President-Elect:** Kristi Klein was nominated and approved by consensus.
- **Parliamentarian:** Melisa Gallo was nominated and approved by consensus.
- **Vice President:** Traci Vennie was nominated and approved by consensus.

##### **Parliamentarian Duties:**

- Advises the President on procedural matters.
- Ensure meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order.
- Helps maintain professionalism and structure during Senate meetings.

##### **Committee Sign-Ups**

- Sheets were circulated and collected.
- The Executive Committee will review sign-ups to ensure balanced membership across committees.
- Final committee assignments will be ratified at the next meeting.

## **Board of Trustees Education Update**

- Met on May 8th.
- Featured student-faculty presentations:
  - Topics included muscle activity while walking downstairs and amateur (ham) radio.
  - The ham radio station is open to the public on Thursdays from 7–9 PM.
- Students emphasized how these experiences improved their writing and research skills.

## **Transfer Student Insights:**

- Since Fall 2019, the top reasons for leaving: financial and social.
- 79% of students who left transferred to a wide range of institutions.
- Top 3 transfer destinations: Lackawanna College, Penn State, and Rutgers.
- 21% of students who left eventually returned to the university.

## **Student Retention & Transfer Insights**

- Many students who left the university were in the College of Arts and Sciences, especially those under the common curriculum without a declared major.
- Top majors among those who left: Biology, Psychology, and Criminal Justice.
- 21% of students who left eventually returned to the university.
- Top transfer destinations: Lackawanna College, Penn State, and Rutgers.

## **Student Support & Engagement Programs**

- Ongoing efforts to support first-generation students and build resilience.
- Programs include:
  - CARE
  - New Student Orientation
  - Fall Welcome
  - Thrive
  - Faculty Office Hours
  - Early Alert
  - In-Class Faculty Interventions

## **Dean & Academic Program Updates**

- Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Program launching in Fall.
- Counseling Master's Degree remains in-person.
- Health Promotion renamed to Public Health; consultants hired to support the master's program.
- Exploring concentrations in Sports Management and Supply Chain Management.
- CAS curriculum needs modernization to meet industry standards.
- Discussion of humanities commons as a physical space to reflect institutional roots.
- Plans to revamp the Pre-Med program and integrate ethical AI education.

## **Board of Trustees Enrollment Management Update**

- As of May 8:
  - Class of 2029: 954 net deposits (up from 815 last year).
  - 250 students of color, 287 first-gen students.
  - Discount rate: 62%.
  - Net tuition revenue per student: \$21,181 (up from \$20,820).

- Campaign Progress:
  - \$155.6 million in gifts and pledges.
  - ~50% received to date.
  - Majority of funds are highly restricted, including estate gifts.

### **Summer Series Training Events (via Teams)**

- Prompted by confusion around the event setup and space reservations.
- Staff Development Committee (led by Brian) will host training sessions.
- First session will cover the Reservation Handbook.
- Future sessions may include:
  - Catering system navigation
  - Work order system usage

### **Work Order System Feedback**

The new system is not user-friendly:

- Requires manual entry of name, email, and phone number each time.
- Lacks clear fields for event time.
- Editing a submitted work order may result in it being lost.
- Staff are encouraged to document issues and submit feedback collectively.
- A shared document may be created to track bugs, missing features, and usability concerns.
- Room listings are incomplete or mislabeled.
- Users must manually enter contact info every time.
- Edited work orders may not be processed correctly.
- Some rooms (e.g., in DeNaples) are missing from dropdowns.
- The help extension listed (9900) doesn't appear to be active or searchable.
- The system is standalone and does not integrate with Banner.
- IT was not involved in the selection or implementation process.
- Staff are encouraged to document issues and submit feedback collectively.

### **Upcoming Event: Spring Staff Appreciation**

- Date: Wednesday, June 25
- Time: Starting at 2:00 PM
- Location: Campus
- Feature: *Groovy Baby Ice Cream Truck* (serving everything except banana splits)
- RSVPs: 182 as of yesterday (expecting more!)
- Reminder: You must have a ticket to receive ice cream.
  - If you haven't registered, email Melisa ASAP.
  - No ticket, no ice cream — due to past issues with multiple servings.
  - Tickets are distributed to those who RSVP'd.

### **Fall Break Event: Dunkin' Donut Cruiser**

- Date: Tuesday, October 14 (Fall Break)
- Time: 11:50 AM
  - No cost to Staff Senate.
  - Free sample-sized hot drinks, games, and gift cards.

- No registration required, but 150+ attendees are needed.
- Promo will go out closer to the date.

### **Staff Senate Tablecloth**

- If used for an event, please return it to Lucy in the Registrar's Office afterward.

### **Newsletter**

- Still in progress, expected to be released early next week.
- If you have content to submit, please send it to Melisa Gallo.

### **Senator Updates**

- New members: Diana Collins Gilmore and Bridget Hunter.
- Adjustments made due to retirements and college changes.

### **Committee Updates:**

### **Social Events**

- Ice cream event next week—tickets will be distributed at the table.
- Planning underway for Christmas luncheon — venue booking to happen soon.

### **Staff Development**

- Will begin planning summer training series via Teams.
- The first session will focus on the reservation handbook.
- Future topics may include catering system and work order system navigation.

### **Recognition**

- The luncheon was a success—thanks to all who helped!
- The Staff Senate tablecloth was found (a small but important victory!).

### **Assessment**

- A QR code evaluation will be available at the Groovy Baby Ice Cream Truck event next week.
- A year-end report is being compiled from all surveys conducted throughout the year.

### **Finance**

- Thanks to Christie's advocacy and Patty's support, Staff Senate was allowed to roll over \$1,700 from last year's budget.
- Current remaining budget: \$1,964.65.
- Estimated cost for Groovy Baby Ice Cream Truck: ~\$1,000.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned with thanks to all for their participation and contributions.