

TO: Staff Senate
FROM: Kristi Klien
DATE: October 15, 2025
SUBJECT: Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Jill Eidenberg, Lucy Grissinger, Denise Kuzma, Traci Vennie, Melissa Eckenrode, Janice Mecadon, Rose Ann Jubinski, Patti Tetreault, Sybil Keris, Gina Butler, Melisa Gallo, Megan Sweeney, Kelly Cook, Bridget Hunter, Grace Crowley, Bryn Schofield, Kristi Klien, Bridget Judge, Meghan Eidenberg, Bridget Conlogue, Shawn Beistline, Autumn Forgione, Brenda Amato, Shonna Emick

Not in Attendance: Alex Wasalinko, Hollie Roscioli, Gerianne Barber, Brenda Clarke, Raymond Kratz, Diane Collins Gilmore, Marcella LaMura, Melissa Przewlocki, Melissa Przewlocki, Joseph Medina, Daniela Teneva, Melinda Finnerty

Welcome: Kristi Klien called the meeting to order. Janice Mecadon offered the opening prayer. Volunteer needed for opening prayer at the next meeting, Bryn Schofield volunteered. 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 and minutes were approved.

Guest – Kate Yerkes – Assistant Vice Provost for Planning/Institutional Effectiveness

University Strategic Plan Update

- **Purpose:** The new strategic plan is being introduced, and feedback will be gathered from campus groups throughout October.
- **Communication:** An email from Father Marina and Dr. Stewart shared the draft plan and a feedback survey link.
- **Process Timeline:**
 - Began in Fall 2023 with collaboration between the President's Office and University Planning Committee.
 - Extensive input from faculty, staff, students, and trustees through surveys and discussions.
 - Draft developed after reviewing prior plan, mission alignment, enrollment, financial, and budget planning.
- **Core Principles:** Grounded in Catholic and Jesuit values, emphasizing:
 - *Cura personalis* (care for individuals)
 - *Cura apostolica* (care for the institution and its resources)
- **Strategic Goals:** Four major emerging priorities for the next five years (details in the full document).
- **Implementation:**
 - High-level plan guides divisional and departmental plans.
 - Committee will monitor and update as needed—plan is a living document.

- **Mission Review:** Considering updates to include:
 - Explicit mention of social justice and students.
- **Next Steps:** Feedback open through October; revisions will follow.

Mission Statement:

- Two potential changes under consideration (no decision yet):
 1. Explicitly include social justice commitment.
 2. Mention students directly as central to the mission.

Draft Vision Statement:

- Proposed wording emphasizes:
 - Confidence in the future
 - Extending reach and impact
 - Preparing graduates for the 21st century
 - Igniting dedication to Catholic and Jesuit ideals

Four Strategic Priority Areas:

1. **Future-Oriented Enrollment Strategy**
 - Increase net tuition revenue
 - Attract more transfer students
 - Grow graduate enrollment and programs
 - Ensure financial accessibility for students
2. **Next-Generation Learning & Innovation**
 - Launch new mission-focused programs aligned with market demand
 - Advance pedagogy and high-impact practices (research, experiential learning)
 - Implement systematic program health assessments
3. **Student Success & Retention**
 - Improve undergraduate retention and graduation rates
 - Enhance graduate student support
 - Strengthen academic and co-curricular initiatives
4. **Organizational Effectiveness**
 - Modernize policies, processes, and workflows
 - Upgrade technology and data management
 - Improve infrastructure and space planning

Next Steps:

- Feedback on mission, vision, and plan open through October.
- Planning committee will refine based on input and maintain plan as a **living document**.

Visual Framework & Implementation

- **Slide Overview:**
 - Shows how the strategic plan flows down to:
 - College/divisional plans
 - Departmental plans
 - Strategic support plans for cross-divisional issues (e.g., data management)
- **Continuous Review:**
 - Ongoing environmental scanning for external changes

- Institutional assessments to monitor metrics and performance against goals

Integration with Accreditation & Mission Reviews

- **Middle States Self-Study (2025–2028) and Mission Priority Examen** will:
 - Evaluate alignment of mission and goals
 - Require evidence of how initiatives fulfill institutional commitments

Feedback & Engagement

- **Questions for Stakeholders:**
 - Do the four priority areas feel right? Anything missing?
 - How do these connect to your work?
 - What measures indicate success?
 - Is the mission evident in the plan?
 - What barriers might hinder implementation?
- **Feedback Timeline:**
 - QR code survey open through October 31 (likely extended to early November)
 - Additional open forum on November 3

Key Observations Raised

- Concern about repetition among priorities—could some be combined?
- Missing emphasis on faculty and staff as vital resources:
 - Suggest adding explicit reference in graphics or supporting text
 - Ensure technology, space, and process changes consider their impact
- Previous mission statement included faculty/staff; current draft does not.

Liaison Report: Patricia Tetreault

Recent Leadership & Governance Activities

- **Leadership Forum (Sept 16):**
 - Audience: ~80 staff supervisors
 - Topics: University finances, strategic plan, mission priority examen, resource management committee
 - Outcome: Positive feedback; interest in continuing similar sessions
- **Board Meeting (Oct 2, NYC):**
 - Followed by President's Medal Gala (formerly PBC Dinner)
 - Purpose: Fundraising for presidential scholarships
 - Outcome: \$2M+ raised, strong donor engagement, alumni and student participation

Provost Search Update

- **Current Status:** Candidate calibration completed
 - Process: Aligning candidate profiles with position requirements using assessment tool
 - Assisted by search firm with sample profiles
- **Next Steps:**
 - Committee meets before Christmas to select first-round interviewees

- Interviews during intersession
- Finalists visit campus in February (forums for community engagement)

Policy & Handbook Updates

- **Policy Consolidation:**
 - New centralized website in development to access all university policies (HR, IT, General Counsel, etc.)
- **Staff Handbook Revision:**
 - Updates include language clarification (no policy removals)
 - Will be released alongside updated Title IX policy
 - Edits are clarifications only
- **Bereavement Policy:**
 - Current handbook shows old version, but university is honoring the updated policy.
 - Full revised handbook expected within next week.

Student Service Trips

- Challenge: Shortage of chaperones for Intersession and Spring break trips.
- Action: Spread the word this week; timeline is tight for confirming trips.

Upcoming Cabinet Topics

1. **Health Plan Renewal (2026):**
 - Rate increase confirmed, details pending.
 - Drivers:
 - Rising provider costs (less competition among hospitals)
 - Specialty medication expenses
 - Inflation trend ~8%
 - Current plan design is very rich (low deductible, low copay), costly to maintain.
 - Spend: \$18M this year, projected \$20M next year.
 - Open enrollment packet target date: Nov 7.
 - Possible future discussion on plan design changes and spousal coverage incentives.
2. **Staff Salary Increase:**
 - Typically decided and communicated now but delayed this year.
 - Updates are expected soon.
3. **Denim Fridays:**
 - Communication on this topic is coming soon.

Key Questions Raised

- Will rate increase also mean plan design changes?
 - Answer: Not confirmed; possible in future if costs remain unsustainable.
- Incentives for employees who opt out of coverage?
 - Under consideration; balancing cost savings vs. added expense.
 - Two perspectives on reducing plan participants:
 - Remove those who don't need coverage → risk of adverse selection (sicker individuals remain).
 - Spread risk across a larger group → stabilizes cost fluctuations.

Current Structure:

- University is self-funded (pays claims directly).
- Use stop-loss insurance for catastrophic claims.

Possible Future Strategies:

- Adjust premium contributions (e.g., higher % for dependents).
- Spousal's carve-outs (if spouse has other coverage).
- No immediate changes yet, but sustainability is a concern.

Presidents Report – Kristi Klien

- **UGC (University Governance Council):**
 - Last meeting: Sept 11 (introductory with students).
 - Next meeting: scheduled for tomorrow.
- **UPC (University Planning Committee):**
 - Strategic plan remains primary focus (9–12 months of work).
- **Board of Trustees:**
 - Presentation by Human Capital on Strategic Enrollment Goals:
 1. Increase net tuition revenue.
 2. Expand new student demand & pipeline (increase applications by 30%, reduce acceptance by 10%).
 3. Improve retention & graduation rates.
 4. Grow enrollment via current and new programs.
 5. Define mission success and objectives more concretely.
 6. Elevate marketing and brand.
 7. Strengthen enrollment management organization (analytics, talent, compensation).
 - Emphasis on brand visibility, website improvements, and market expansion.

Other Updates

- **Graduate Tuition:** Still an open item.
- **Staff Event (Dunkin' Cruiser):**
 - 300 samples served; likely last staff-only event due to vendor's student focus.
 - Future events may require collaboration with student groups.
- **Constitution & Bylaws Amendments:**
 - Will go to Cabinet and Board of Trustees (not UGC).
 - Working with Patty and Rob on updated wording.

Governance & Upcoming Events

- **Constitution & Bylaws Amendments:**
 - Goal: Align wording and remove need for "President-Elect" role (shadowing year eliminated).
 - Next Steps:
 - Send updated draft to Patty and Rob for review.
 - Advance through Cabinet → Board of Trustees.
- **Staff Senate Roundtable:**

- Volunteers: Megan, Melinda, Melissa and Melisa.
- Target Date: November (before Thanksgiving) to avoid overlapping with:
 - Communication Symposium: Oct 29
 - Christmas Luncheon: Dec 10
- Format: Invite Patty for Q&A; schedule room and send invitations.
- Additional help welcome.

Standing Committee Reports

Communications

Communication Symposium (Oct 29)

- RSVP Status: ~140 confirmed (spring symposium had 170).
- Faculty Engagement: Higher participation this time, possibly due to Wednesday scheduling.
- Cutoff Date: Oct 22; reminder planned.
- Format:
 - Encourage interactive Q&A.
 - Note cards and Dropbox option for anonymous questions.
- Strategic Plan Connection:
 - Final reminder will highlight the draft plan and feedback opportunity.
- Goal: Beat previous attendance record (170).

Additional Updates

- President's Email: Mentioned symposium, expected to boost RSVPs.
- Questions for Cabinet: Will share collected questions with Patty and team.
- Personal Update: Denise announced her Pregnancy. Expects to be out April–June for maternity leave; interim will fill your role.

Finance

- **Donation/Agency Account:**
 - Current balance: **\$102.62**
- **Overall Budget:**
 - Total receipts to date: **\$1,040.90**
 - Remaining balance: **\$9,879.95**
 - *Note:* Does **not** include recent expense for shuttle to Farmers Market (~\$35).

Social Events & Community Building

Committee Meeting:

- Scheduled for October 21 to review critical needs and functions. Christmas Luncheon:
- Confirmed for December 10.

Action Item:

- Invite Father Marina to provide opening prayer (he usually does one of the seatings).
- Will be emailing invitations sometime before Thanksgiving.

Staff Development

Training & Resources

- **Event Planning 101:**
 - Committee met last week; plan in place.
 - Goal: Launch by Thanksgiving on staff site.
 - Will email link to all staff and use for onboarding.
- **Future Training:**
 - Short videos on Microsoft applications (e.g., Forms).
 - Working with Cindy Green; videos will be 5-minute segments for easy access.

Staff Recognition

- **Meeting Recap:**
 - Farewell gathering for Janice and business discussion.
 - Reviewed Sorsum Corda Award policy (last updated 2022).
 - Questions on policy → will consult Christy, Tracy, and HR if needed.
 - Goal: Launch nomination form by end of November.

Event Assessment

- **Reminder:** Contact Geri Barber before events for evaluation setup.
 - Data will inform success metrics and improvements.

Admissions & Enrollment Presentation

- **Key Takeaways:**
 - Aggressive goals for enrollment growth (graduate, transfer).
 - Hiring for digital/social media and data analytics roles.
 - Emphasis on tech-driven processes (AI transcript scanning, workflow automation).
 - Requires community-wide effort and financial investment.
 - Timeline: ~5-year plan aligned with strategic plan.
- **Social Media Presence:**
 - University now visible on TikTok alongside peer institutions.
 - Positive sign for brand engagement.

Education Committee Update (Board of Trustees):

- **Weiss Hall Opening:**
 - Presentation by Mike Jenkins (Criminal Justice).
 - Building functioning well; minor punch list under warranty.
 - Goal: Recruit students and foster community partnerships.
- **Academic Priorities (Interim Provost Tracey Stewart):**
 - Strengthen faculty/staff relationships and communication.
 - Transition to Ignatian Core Curriculum (ICC):
 - Paperwork this year; rollout Fall 2027.

- Strategic plan alignment.
- Program assessments: review enrollment, cost, and mission alignment.

Adjournment:

- A motion to adjourn was passed.