

TO: Staff Senate
FROM: Kristi Klien
DATE: September 17, 2025
SUBJECT: Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Jill Eidenberg, Lucy Grissinger, Denise Kuzma, Traci Vennie, Melissa Eckenrode, Janice Mecadon, Melinda Finnerty, Rose Ann Jubinski, Patti Tetreault, Daniela Teneva, Sybil Keris, Gina Butler, Melisa Gallo, Diane Collins Gilmore, Melissa Przewlocki, Megan Sweeney, Kelly Cook, Bridget Hunter, Grace Crowley, Bryn Schofield, Kristi Klien, Bridget Judge, Marcella LaMura, Meghan Eidenberg, Bridget Conlogue, Joseph Medina

Not in Attendance: Alex Wasalinko, Brenda Amato, Shonna Emick, Hollie Roscioli, Gerianne Barber, Shawn Beistline, Brenda Clarke, Autumn Forgione, Raymond Kratz

Welcome: Kristi Klien called the meeting to order. Kelly Cook offered the opening prayer. Volunteer needed for opening prayer at the next meeting, Janice Mecadon 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 – Tim Dulle - Executive Director of The Jesuit Center
Introduced himself and offered his background and experience.

Jesuit Center Updates & Opportunities

Open Door Policy:

The Jesuit Center has a lending library of books and welcomes informal drop-ins.

- Father Jim Redington, Assistant Director, is often available.
- Staff are open to questions or conversations—especially about mission or Jesuit-related topics.
- Email communication is encouraged for any inquiries or to set up a time to chat.

Upcoming Programs:

Pilgrimages:

- January: Trip to *El Salvador*.
- June: Pilgrimage to *Spain and Rome*, following in the footsteps of Jesus and Ignatius.
- All are welcome and encouraged to apply.

Jesuit Identity Week:

- Scheduled for October.
- Includes a full slate of programming.
- Staff are encouraged to check their schedules and attend events that interest them.

Liaison Report: Patricia Tetreault

Cabinet Updates & Strategic Initiatives

- Cabinet Retreat:
 - A recent half-day retreat focused on:
 - Enrollment and financial planning.
 - Introduction to the Mission Priority Examen process, led by Dan.
- Mission Priority Examen:
 - A periodic self-assessment process affirming the university's Jesuit Catholic identity.
 - Involves evaluating alignment with key characteristics.
 - A steering committee will lead the process.
 - The last cycle was seen as rewarding; this round is expected to be even more meaningful due to ongoing mission-focused work.
- **Resource Management Committee (RMC):**
 - A subgroup of Cabinet focused on fiscal resource allocation, especially staffing.
 - Hiring managers must:
 - Consult with divisional leadership.
 - Submit requests (e.g., backfilling, reorganizing, part-time roles) to the RMC for review.
 - The process is still new, with about six cases reviewed so far.

Organizational Updates & Strategic Projects

- **Staff Retirement Program:**
 - As staff retire or transition, departments are encouraged to rethink workflows and explore alternative ways to manage responsibilities.
 - The process is being handled thoughtfully and effectively, with expectations for continued improvement as it becomes more familiar.
- **Provost Search:**
 - Launched over the summer in partnership with Diversified Search Group.
 - The firm is actively engaging with applicants and reports strong interest in the position.
 - Nominations are open to the campus community:
 - Submit via the Diversified website or directly to the search committee chair.
 - Recent committee activities:
 - Completed search training and developed an assessment tool.
 - October meeting will include candidate calibration—a review of anonymized applicant profiles to ensure alignment with the position profile.
 - Final candidate selection and interviews are expected later in the semester.
 - A campus-wide update will follow the October meeting.
- **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Project:**
 - Led by Cindy Green and her team.
 - Focused on evaluating the university's use of Banner and exploring future options:
 - Continue with Banner?
 - Upgrade to a cloud version?
- The project will formally begin with campus-wide engagement to assess:

- Functional needs
- Potential timelines
- Implementation strategies
- A full system change would likely take several years and require significant investment.
- Emphasis on ensuring a clear return on investment before moving forward.

Upcoming Management Meeting (Management Team Focus):

- Scheduled for next Monday.
- All staff supervisors have been invited—this is a new initiative.
- Goal: Improve information flow to managers so they can better communicate with their teams.
- Topics will include financials, enrollment, and university context, especially for those not attending Senate or receiving detailed updates from divisional leadership.
- Intended to share information Cabinet has been reviewing for some time, especially around enrollment and the strategic enrollment plan.
- No announcements are planned regarding:
 - Staff salary increases
 - Position cuts or restructuring
- The meeting is meant to inform and prepare managers to communicate more effectively with their teams.
- Steve will present on the university's financial pressures, including:
 - Enrollment trends
 - Expense challenges\external factors (e.g., international student enrollment)
- Planned presentations:
 - Steve: Financial overview
 - Shannon: Enrollment trends
 - Tracy: Strategic plan
 - Mission Priority Examen: A representative will present in Dan's absence
 - Father Marina will be present
- Clarification: This is not a meeting to announce staff cuts or salary freezes—intended purely for transparency and information sharing.

October Communication Symposium:

- Organized by Denise and her committee.
- Cabinet will participate to share updates with a broader campus audience.
- Will build on the supervisor meeting by sharing similar information with a broader campus audience.

Staff Salary Update:

- No confirmation yet from Cabinet regarding salary increases.
- Typically addressed this time of year, but no decision has been finalized.

Contract Negotiations:

- Ongoing and active.
- FPC (administrative team) is committed to meeting as frequently as possible.
- Scheduling is challenging, especially during the academic term.
- A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow.

Faculty Minimal Compliance & Labor Negotiations

Student Impact:

- Concerns raised about minimal compliance levels and their impact on staff.
- Staff are receiving student and parent complaints.
- Leadership acknowledged the concern and committed to relaying it back to the appropriate parties.
- Students are increasingly affected by faculty operating under minimal compliance:
 - Inability to access support persons for conduct processes.
 - Delays in letters of recommendation.
 - Faculty openly discussing contract status in class, including intentions to picket at open house events.
- These issues are causing student anxiety and confusion, especially given the high cost of attendance.
- Staff are feeling helpless in supporting students due to lack of clarity and control.
- **Clarification on Minimal Compliance:**
 - There is uncertainty about what minimal compliance entails post-contract expiration (after August 31).
 - It's believed that:
 - Before August 31: Faculty were bound by full contract terms.
 - After August 31: Faculty are still being paid but may be operating under a second level of minimal compliance, the details of which are unclear.
 - Leadership will seek clarification and share guidance to help staff understand what faculty are expected or not expected to do.

Labor Rights & Negotiation Sensitivity:

- Faculty have rights under the National Labor Relations Act, including the right to protest or picket.
- Leadership is committed to respecting those rights while also acknowledging the disappointment and disruption this causes.

Labor Negotiations: Community Impact & Reflections

- **Administration's Perspective:**
 - The administration is focused on protecting management rights and being prudent with resources, considering the needs of the entire university community, not just one group.
 - The union's role is to advocate for its members, who are also part of the broader community.
 - This can naturally lead to tension, especially when both sides care deeply about the institution.
- **Emotional Climate:**
 - The impact on students—such as lack of support, missed recommendations, and classroom disruptions—deeply affects staff, who feel powerless to help.
 - Leadership emphasized the need to respect the negotiation process, check emotional responses, and remain honest and constructive.
- **Hope for Resolution:**
 - The speaker expressed hope and commitment to working through the challenges and emphasized the importance of community support.
 - Acknowledged the painful nature of the process and the desire to move forward once an agreement is reached.
- **Negotiation Context:**
 - This round of negotiations feels more intense and prolonged, likely due to:
 - Weaker financial conditions than in past years.

- Broader concerns beyond compensation.
- Leadership is committed to listening to staff concerns and passing along feedback.

Contract Duration & Historical Context

- The current faculty contract under negotiation is for three years.
- While a five-year contract has some appeal (e.g., longer-term stability), it's more difficult to commit to due to:
 - Unpredictable financial conditions
 - External pressures (e.g., enrollment shifts, economic uncertainty)
- In the past, the contract cycles were extended due to:
 - Presidential transition
 - COVID-19 disruptions
- The last full negotiation occurred in 2022, and the current one in 2025 is a scheduled follow-up.

Denim Friday Proposal

- A request was made to expand Denim Friday as a year-round option.
- There was enthusiastic support for the idea, especially if it includes flexibility (e.g., sneakers).
- The group emphasized that staff know how to dress professionally even in jeans.
- The suggestion will be brought to Cabinet.

Presidents Report – Kristi Klien

President's Report:

- Skipped this month to prioritize motions and time-sensitive items, as several attendees needed to leave early.

UPC & UGC Updates:

- **University Planning Committee (UPC):**
 - Has been focused on the strategic plan throughout the summer.
 - Kate will be a guest at the next Staff Senate meeting to present on the plan.
 - The plan is still in draft form, but ready for Board of Trustees review in October.
 - Board approval is expected in December, with feedback and potential revisions in between.
- **University Governance Committee (UGC):**
 - Held its first meeting since May.
 - Primarily a meet-and-greet session with student, faculty, and staff representatives.
 - No major business discussed; updates will follow in the next meeting.

Previous Business:

- **Graduate-Level Tuition Benefits for Staff Dependents:**
 - Still under review.
 - No final decision; remains an open item until further clarification is available.

Summer Series Trainings:

- Originally intended to include live sessions on systems like room reservations, work orders, and catering.
- Due to scheduling conflicts, the committee will now:
 - Create a recorded Teams presentation internally.
 - Host it on the Staff Senate website as a training resource.
 - Make it available for new staff onboarding or refresher training.

Dunkin' Cruiser Event – Save the Date!

- **Date & Time:** Tuesday, October 14 from 11:50 AM
(During Fall Break – minimal student presence expected)
- **Location:** By the flagpoles/turnaround near the library
(*Note: The truck must park on the street due to Aramark's campus exclusivity rights.*)
- **What to Expect:**
 - Free coffee and drink samples
 - Games, giveaways, and gift cards
 - A fun, carnival-like atmosphere for staff and administrators
- **No RSVP Required:**
 - Dunkin' will prepare for at least 150 attendees
 - Open to staff and administrators only

Next Steps:

- A "Save the Date" email will go out soon
- A reminder email will follow the week before the event
- Lucy and a volunteer (Kelly) will coordinate the communications.

Constitution & Bylaws Updates

Constitution Amendment – Senate Eligibility:

- In 2022, the bylaws were amended to change eligibility for Staff Senate membership from two years to one year of continuous employment.
- The constitution was not updated at that time, so a motion was made and passed to align the constitution with the bylaws.
- Next steps:
 - The change will be submitted to the University Governance Council (UGC).
 - If approved, it will move to the Board of Trustees, likely for the December meeting.

Bylaws Clarification – Consecutive Presidential Terms:

- A motion was made and passed to clarify language around the president-elect role when a president is re-elected for a second consecutive term.
- The issue:
 - The bylaws currently allow for a president-elect to shadow the current president for a year.
 - However, if the current president is re-elected, there is no one to shadow, creating confusion.
- Proposed solution:
 - Add a sentence to the relevant section stating that in cases of consecutive presidential terms, there will be no president-elect during the transition year.
- This change will be drafted and submitted for formal approval.

Previous Business

President's Award Plaque:

- Still at Superior for engraving or updates.
- Will be followed up on and placed outside the boardroom once completed.

New Business

Fall Roundtable Planning

Format Decision:

- The group unanimously agreed to host one combined roundtable event for all staff constituencies (MTTP, Clerical, Para/Professional), as done last fall.
- This format was preferred due to:
 - Overlapping concerns across groups
 - Easier scheduling
 - Stronger participation and engagement

Planning Team:

- Volunteers: Meg, Melissa, Melissa, and Melinda
- Tasks include:
 - Save-the-date and invitation
 - Room reservation and setup
 - Food order and labeled box lunches
 - RSVP collection and logistics

Support:

- Kristi has templates and materials from last year and will assist with coordination.

Security Reminder: Office Theft Incident

- During the Mass of the Holy Spirit, a wallet was stolen from an office in AMH.
- The identity of the individual responsible is unknown—could be a student, staff member, or someone from outside the university.
- The wallet was used shortly after the theft to attempt purchases in Taylor.
- The incident is under investigation.

Action for All Staff:

- Lock your office doors if you leave, even briefly.
- Do not leave valuables (e.g., wallets, purses) unattended or unsecured.
- Please share this reminder with your teams to help prevent future incidents.

Standing Committee Reports**Communications****Communications Symposium – October 29**

- Event Title: “Purpose and Pressure in Higher Ed”
- Date & Time: Wednesday, October 29, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Location: Moscovitz Theater
- A new, more interactive format:
 - Less formal presentation
 - Open Q&A and discussion with Cabinet members
 - Questions will still be collected in advance, but live participation is encouraged

Designed to foster transparency, engagement, and shared understanding

- Objectives:
 - Articulate and understand the pressures facing the university
 - Communicate action steps being taken or considered in response
 - Build community through shared knowledge and dialogue
- Key Topics:
 - External pressures on higher education (e.g., enrollment trends, federal policy changes)
 - How these pressures have shaped the strategic plan, which Kate Yorkis will address

- **Cabinet Participation:**
 - Cabinet has reviewed and approved the format
 - Father Marina will attend and supports the open discussion approach
- **Logistics:**
 - Boxed lunches will be provided
 - Invitations and details will be sent out soon

Finance Report

- **Agency Account:** Current balance: \$102.62
- **Regular Budget:**
 - Total spent to date: \$998.47
 - Notable expense: The Ice Cream Social was charged to this year's budget (not last year's), which explains the early spending.
 - Remaining budget (as of end of August): \$9,922.38
- **Budget Cycle Reminder:**
 - The current budget cycle began on June 1, not January 1.

Social Events & Community Building

Christmas Luncheon

- **Date:** Tuesday, December 10
- **Format:** Same as last year:
 - Two seatings to accommodate staff
 - Served meals to ensure everyone receives the correct portions (e.g., turkey)
- **Planning:**
 - Events Committee will meet in October to finalize details
 - Aramark is on board and supportive of the format
 - Table dismissal will be managed again this year
 - Check-in process will be improved with more helpers
- **Charitable Giving:**
 - The committee is considering continuing with the same donation recipient as the past two years due to strong student need and appreciation
 - Open to suggestions for new causes if anyone has ideas
- **Logistics:**
 - Lunch tickets worked so well last year and will be used again

Supplies & Storage

- **Staff Senate Tablecloth:**
 - Stored in the Registrar's Office
 - To use for event: Contact Lucy
 - Must be returned after use
- **Staff Senate Notecards:**
 - Available for thank-you notes or recognition
 - Contact Lucy or Traci to request
- **Spirit Award Bells:**
 - Extra bells are available if needed

Staff Development

Iggy Shuttle to Farmers Market

- Start Date: Friday, September 26
- Cost: \$40 per trip (covers driver)
- Frequency: Once a week (pilot program)
- Season: Mid-July through November
- Goal: Provide staff with access to the local farmer's market
- Next Steps:
 - Exploring cost-sharing with the Jesuit Center
 - If successful, may expand frequency or partnerships

Staff Recognition & Excellence Awards

Spirit Award & Committee Transition

- **Meg Cullen-Brown Spirit Award:**
 - Committee reviewed how to access and update the award board
 - Planning to revisit award logistics in the next meeting
 - Audit team has reached out for more information due to committee turnover

New Senator Orientation & Committee Assignments

- Welcome to New Senators: Grace, Megan, and Marcella were welcomed as new Staff Senate members.
- Orientation Materials:
 - Kristi will send a follow-up email with:
 - PowerPoint presentations used during Staff Senate orientation
 - A list of standing committees
 - New senators are asked to review the materials and email their committee preferences.
- **Committee Updates:**
 - Once preferences are received, committee membership will be updated and ratified at the next meeting.
 - A new Finance Committee member is needed from the MTP constituency due to a vacancy.
 - Kristi will reach out to potential candidates.
- **Action Items:**
 - Kristi will send the orientation email by end of day or next morning.
 - New senators should respond with committee preferences.
 - Committee changes will be voted on at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

- A motion to adjourn was passed.