

TO: Staff Senate  
FROM: Kristi Klien  
DATE: March 20, 2024  
SUBJECT: February 21, 2024, Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

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**In Attendance:** Gerianne Barber, Brenda Clarke, Bridget Conlogue, Peggy Doolittle, Lucia Grissinger, Meg Hambrose, Rose Ann Jubinski, Sybil Keris, Jonathan Kirby, Kristi Klien, Bernard Krzan, Denise Kuzma, Tammy Manka, Sandina Meo, Meghan Nowakowski, Peter Sakowski, Patricia Savitts, Traci Vennie, and Patricia Tetreault.

**Not in Attendance:** Brenda Amato, Shawn Beistline, Grismeir DeJesus, Amy Black, Rebecca Dzikowski, Melissa Eckenrode, Autumn Forgione, Kym Fetsko, Lori Flynn, Melisa Gallo, Mark Murphy, Daniela Teneva, and Janet Schieber.

**Welcome:** Ms. Klien called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM. Peggy Doolittle offered the opening prayer. Bridget Conlogue will offer the opening prayer at the next meeting. The Land Acknowledgement Statement was read by Ms. Klien. Attendance was checked, an alternate quorum was met.

**Review of Previous Month's Minutes:** The minutes from the January meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved.

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

**Guest(s)** – There were no guests at today's meeting.

#### **Liaison Report – Patricia Tetreault**

Cabinet Report:

- Board of Trustees here February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Next meeting is in May.
- Fiscal 2025 budget work continues, to be presented to the Board of Trustees at the May meeting.
- Provost, Michelle Maldonato talked about the Strategic Plan ending in 2025 and the goal is to begin planning for the new strategic plan with the implementation of a survey.
- Subsurface work slated to begin for the new building.
- Father Marina continues work on capital campaign, the goal is \$135 M and it ends May 25<sup>th</sup>, traveling in support of campaign at events and potential donors.
- Dan Cosacchi is working on the Mission Priority Examen, this is an exercise the Jesuit Province asks us to go through to confirm out Catholic and Jesuit identity, self-study and visit; due fall 2026 when the visit comes.
- Liz Garcia talked about establishing gender neutral bathrooms around campus; single stall existing may be resigned to accommodate gender neutral.
- Bobby Davis is working on employee meal plans; Aramark proposal for employees to be able to purchase a block of meals; looking at payroll deduction to accommodate as it is a larger sum up front and may deter staff; the idea is access to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and some flex dollars for 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
- Approved 24-25 staff holiday calendar will be sent by Bri ASAP; 18-day schedule next year

Additionally:

- IT implemented an External Tagging notification for all emails received from a source outside of the University. The notification is in the form of a purple banner at the top and bottom of the email. A senator raised a concern about sustainability as the banner lengthens the email when printed. IT has streamlined the purple banner to take up minimal space while being large enough to capture attention.
- Security awareness training – was sent last fall, this year we intend to make it mandatory.
- Updated staff handbook acknowledgement received an excellent response, clarification noted that signing does not mean in agreement.
- Exempt time entry and approval processes input two pays ago; going well; 18-19 on the first cycle with errors; 11 with errors this second cycle.
- 1095 available electronically now – The University of Scranton is required to offer it to document we were offered coverage; able to opt out of the paper copy will be sent by mid-March but can opt out.
- Department of Labor has proposed an increase to the current overtime threshold of \$684 per week. This means, generally, if you currently make less than this amount, you would be eligible for overtime pay under Department of Labor overtime guidelines. Employees earning over \$684 per week would be “exempt” from the federal overtime guidelines. The Department of Labor is currently proposing to increase the \$684/week threshold to \$1158 per week which is about \$60K annually. Should this weekly threshold be increased, staff who are make less than the new amount and currently considered exempt will be converted to pay an hourly pay basis, with overtime eligibility. If this occurs, we will communicate with all impacted staff. Final numbers are expected later this spring and will likely be effective sometime this summer.
- Spring convocation last week, full room. The 2023 Sursum Corda recipients were Peggy Doolittle, Advancement Coordinator, Office of Annual Giving; Lisa LoBasso, Director Graduate Academic and Student Services, Academic Affairs; Hollie Roscioli, Zone Supervisor, Facilities; and MaryBeth Watson, Administrative Assistant, PCPS Advising Center, Academic Affairs

BethAnn McCartney to discuss Staff Donation-

- Update on time donation program, it began 2 years ago, during annual open enrollment 91.5 hours vacations days donated and 367.25 hours sick days to the bank donated this year alone; current balance 1582.25 hours available in the bank.
- Policy – several requests not meeting the definition of medical emergency – comes from the IRS not taxable, prolonged absence, significant time away from work, significant loss of income so when someone looks for 1-2 days it does not meet the policy. Those are denied due to the tax saving status given by the IRS. Serious medical definition guided by FMLA verbiage; overnight stay in the hospital; chronic; expected to continue over a period of time; in order to avoid taxation to those who donate, we have to remain compliant with those definitions. Hours remain banked, carried over year to date. Not able to do one-time taxable donations such as we know a person in our office needs help can we donate a day in emergent issues.
- Opened in 2021 – into 22 first donation 222 hours vacation 985 sick 1207 352 issued.
- 2023 -Open 116 vacation 297 sick for 413, Used 124.50
- No requests in 2024 to date.
- Lastly, review of policy noted an eligibility item required by the IRS; individuals must be employed for 90 days to be eligible to participate. The policy will be updated to include this IRS verbiage.

## President's Report

- No report left by Mr. Murphy; Ms. Klien heard reports offered from those in attendance at the various meetings.
- UGC: Kym Fetsko reported on the February 15th meeting.
  - Kate Yerkes reported that the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey was extended to this week. Participation in the survey was decent with about a 10% return rate.
  - The Provost reported that the next 5 year Strategic Plan planning is starting and the three senates will be contacted in the spring for their input.
  - She reported on Cabinet Updates-
  - They held their first Prison program graduation this past fall. It was a moving experience.
  - The Board of Trustees had their retreat recently. Sarah Kenehan gave a presentation on Sustainability.
  - She gave updates on the new building. She said there are plans to address the loss of parking issue.
  - She talked about the changes in FAFSA and how that impacts the timeliness of providing aid packages to incoming students. Some institutions have moved to rolling acceptance as a result. The Enrollment Management team is working on ways to navigate the changes. She said there has been discussion on University's needing to provide the price of individual programming (like what completing a particular program would anticipate regarding salary) and how this could impact Scranton in comparison with other Universities.
  - The CFO Search is underway with an anticipated start date of July 1.

## Faculty Government Updates

- GE Committee are adapting revisions to GE curriculum.
- The result of the Book Store Survey will be compiled later in the month. The students concurred that there is dissatisfaction amongst their constituency.
- The Faculty Senate feels there is a need for increased contact with the Board and President.

## Student Gov

- Their 1<sup>st</sup> Mtg of the semester was on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Pres., Karla Shaffer, attended the National Jesuit Student Leadership Conference. She said it was an amazing experience.
- They've formed an AD Hoc Committee to update their constitution.
- They began a Library reserve project for donated textbooks. Senator, Brian Castrogiovanni, had a meeting with George today. Mark offered support from a sustainability standpoint.
- She reported on their ARAMARK Appreciation Day initiative.

## Staff

- At our last meeting Patti reported on time donation time program and changes to the Staff handbook.
- Election Membership Committee is looking into reducing the number of representatives to reflect the loss of university employees since the inception of the Senate.

Under new business there was discussion on inviting the President to a UGC mtg.

Michelle also said that there is a proposal that Gender Equity Inclusion Committee to fall under CDI Committee as a standing subcommittee.

No UPC meeting held, therefore no report.

Email received from Tara Seeley regarding the Board of Trustees Report

## Previous Business

- Discussed combining Roundtable meetings which prompted discussion that sighted years ago once a year HR provided a printout of the overall worth of your benefit package. Understanding that take home is what we live off but a larger picture of insurance, 401k, Disability, etc. provide a better vision of what the compensation package we each actually receive. To be used as a tool for others to determine what exactly we get here versus other places that pay more such as Chewy. Making more per hour and not bringing more home due to increase cost of insurance at these companies versus ours. To help people make informed decisions. What a snapshot of our days off cost the university.
- Guest presenter Jose Sanchez March 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Looking for volunteers to do some leg work on finding some type of swag for the Staff Senators. Does not need to be through the bookstore. Four Imprint, Brucelli, are some ideas. Kym, Bridget and Melisa G. agreed will work on this. Something to wear on meeting days to make others aware we can bring questions concerns to the senate.

## New Business

- HR training Recognition and Responding – How can we help? This would provide information on sexual assault. Slated to have a speaker Michelle McKnight present on research done with a focus on neuro diverse population. The training or listen and learn April 4<sup>th</sup>, Thursday afternoon. The goal is to tailor the presentation to all staff. Staff Senate would encourage participation. Zoom presentation with spaces available for those that do not have office space.
- Election Committee Proposal - Rose Ann states the group met and due to struggle to get enough people last year needed 18, need 19 this year. Looking back in 2011 there were 810 employees and 33 senators, this equates to almost 25 constituents per senator. In 2024 there are 625

employees, which is 19 constituents per senator. Not wanting to reduce it greatly but feel there is a need to reduce due to lack of interest. Possible starting point, reduce alternates from 2 to 1 per constituency; should we have 30-33 for all staff and get rid of constituencies? Thoughts on going down to 1 alternate; alternates are used monthly and move up regularly. Difficulty acknowledged but concerned we would be weakened by decreasing. Additional feedback – people are feeling pressured into running by others. Should we raise awareness and see how it goes? Where is the breakdown? Managers supportive and feel staff (facilities) not interested.

- Clerical Roundtable to be held March 22, Rose Ann to present on the new myScranton portal and Patti to represent HR.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

- Communications – Melisa Gallo and Denise Kuzma
  - Currently working on the next Communication Symposium
    - Leahy Clinic re-opening/medical school collaboration
    - April 11 Communication Symposium date.
- Elections and Membership – Shawn Beistline, Rose Ann Jubinski, and Kristi Klien
  - Met to discuss the number of senators vs. employees and the calculations. Came up with a few options, which will be presented at the next meeting.
- Finance – Traci Vennie
  - No new updates
- Social Events & Community Building – Melissa Eckenrode and Lucy Grissinger
  - No new updates
- Staff Development –Geri Barber and Meg Hambrose
  - The Staff Showcase will be held on March 13th.
- Staff Recognition & Excellence Awards – Kym Fetsko

### **Ad Hoc Committee Report**

- Assessment – Geri Barber
  - No new updates. The committee is gearing up and hopes to have an outline next month.

### **Items from the Floor**

- None

### **Motion to Adjourn**

- A motion was made to adjourn at 3:28 PM. The motion was seconded and approved.