

UNIVERSITY STAFF SENATE REGULAR MEETING
Mississippi/Illinois Room, Morris University Center
Zoom Meeting ID 945 0315 5890
November 3, 2022 – 9:00am
Approved Minutes

The regular meeting of the University Staff Senate was called to order at 9:01 am on Thursday, November 3, 2022 by President Keith Becherer.

Present: Keith Becherer, Kelly Jo Hendricks, Cindy Cobetto, Angie White, Denyse Anderson, Darryl Cherry, Mike Hamil, Carolyn Jason, Jan Caban, Sara Colvin, Anthony Fearon, Anne Frosh, Jackie Hayes, Doug James, Shane Kessinger, Kim Kilgore, Jared Loyd, Dusty Rhodes, Nicole Robinson, Collin Van Meter, Michael Tadlock (ex officio)

Excused: John Caupert, John Milcic

Guests: Jessica Harris, Bill Retzlaff, Amy Bodenstab, Monica Brooks, Diane Chappel, Jennifer Cottingham, Kristen Durnan, Rachel Garrett, Janet Haroian, Barb Jatcko, Katelyn Kircher, Vicki Kremer, Aaron Kruse, Christopher McCawley, Jessica McCawley, Angie McVey, Sara Miller, John Moore, Lisa Mosley, Jen Oates-Blair, Jeanette Parmenter, Michael Pulley, Michael Reed, Mike Schultz, Melissa Ringerling, Jill Smucker, Laura Strom, Deb Talbot

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes for the October 6, 2022 meeting were approved as written.

INVITED GUEST PRESENTATION:

Dr. Bill Retzlaff, Interim Vice Chancellor for Administration, gave a presentation about his priorities as the new Interim VC. The HR Director search has concluded on-campus interviews, and a chosen candidate should be announced soon. The Chief of Police position needs to go through the SPA process, which Dr. Bill will work on ASAP so that the search committee can begin work. Dr. Bill said he is unsure how long he will be in this interim position, but he is serving as a steward for the VCA unit while in this role. Dr. Bill took questions from the attendees, which included questions regarding the new health science building, salary compression issues on campus as the minimum wage increases, and how to prioritize the vacancies among the VCA unit.

Dr. Jessica Harris, Vice Chancellor for Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, gave an update on the ADEI unit. Diversity Day 2022 went well—over 300 people registered to attend, and the keynote speakers were excellent. Regarding improving Diversity Day going forward, there are conversations about expanding to a Diversity Week, and partnering with SIU Carbondale for SIU System presentations. Dr. Harris has been working on both SIUE and SIU System Strategic Plans, along with a DEI Strategic Plan; DEI is embedded in everything we do, and now there are metrics we are trying to reach. Dr. Harris took questions from the attendees, including the land acknowledge statement, the new BIRT process (which will launch in January), and how to get work done to advance our goals without knowing if more funding will be allocated.

REPORTS:

President Keith Becherer – had the opportunity to meet with the final two (2) candidates for the Executive Director Marketing and Communication position on October 7th and 8th. You may have seen the announcement this week that Kedra Tolson has been named to the position effective December 7th.

Congrats and we look forward to working with her as she transitions into the new role. The Constituency Heads met with the Chancellor on Tuesday, November 1st: I did ask for an Executive Summary from the Budget Consultant and was told it was in the final draft stage and I would be able to share the copy with everyone once received. The Chancellor mentioned his Breakfast Listening Tour with groups of 8-10 participants. He is gathering information on the awareness of the enrollment and budget letter (we all received) and trying to clear up any issues on the SPA process. Asked for feedback on what the campus wants to hear about in the State of the University address which is now scheduled for January 2023. I was happy to hear the Chancellor's commitment to placing an emphasis on Emergency Preparedness. You may recall from my January 6, 2022 report about the priority this needed to be and I would continue to advocate. We have had movement but this Senate can play a role and I urge you to make sure your voices are heard. The Chancellor also shared his plan to be transparent in data for academic units and programs and vowed a renewed sense of accountability to Deans and Chairs. He is also scheduled to present to the Faculty Senate this afternoon at 2:30pm. I plan on attending and will report back any relevant updates. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped share the word about the Senate's co-sponsored event on November 1st entitled Effective Communication with Elected officials. A special thanks to John Shimkus, Sheila Simon, Paul Pitts and John Charles. We also got some great coverage in the Intelligencer. Events like this can help us build our influence, reputation and advocacy for our constituents. Very pleased with how everything worked out and I hope the Senate will continue to offer opportunities for employees in the future!!!

President-Elect Kelly Jo Hendricks – Congrats to Jackie Hayes, 40 under 40! Distributed MarCom's new marks guide...what we are going with for now. We are in the midst of looking at drafts of a new Eddie the Cougar, which will be put up to a university vote. Asked for an updated employee listing from HR; will break it down by categories and post it on Teams. Staff Senate elections will be on April 12, there will be open positions in each constituency group. The Chancellor's Annual Address to the University has been postponed until January 2023, date TBD.

Secretary Angie White – currently working on a survey to all staff. Please take a look if you haven't already. Some resources came from University of Arizona—they have a staff scholarship for staff dealing with a hardship. The times are telling us that we should provide services to staff as well as students.

There were no other executive reports.

HR Director Search – an offer has been extended and accepted, final details on releasing communication and it would likely be shared this week.

SDM Dean Search – second finalist on campus today. We are looking to finish with on-campus finalists before Thanksgiving break.

There were no other reports.

ACTION ITEMS:

The December Staff Senate meeting is on 12/1, which is also the date for the next SIU Board of Trustees meeting. Should we move the date of our December meeting to 12/8? A motion was made to postpone our December Staff Senate meeting until 12/8, and it passed by acclamation.

NEW BUSINESS:

Collin Van Meter, the Staff Senate representative on the State Universities Retirement System Board,

provided an update from the SURS Board meeting. Collin is an elected member of the board, and is 4 years into his 6-year term. SURS is moving along well, and there is still money for our retirement. There will be a special election to replace a board member who recently died.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Tuesday, November 8th is the General Election.

Tuesday, November 15th begins the IL General Assembly Veto Session.

SIU Board of Trustees meeting in Carbondale on Thursday, December 1st.

Commencement Exercises to be held December 16th and 17th.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Pulley, Staff Senate representative on the State Universities Civil Service System, provided an update. SUCSS is moving all civil service tests (with the exception of the police officer series) to a credential-based test, rather than a standardized test. If you meet the minimum criteria, you get a 70. Your experience gets you more points. Mike responded to concerns from attendees about the fairness of this new grading system, which is vague and open to interpretation by the people grading each test.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Submitted by Michael Tadlock, University Governance