MINUTES
University Staff Executive Committee Meeting
10.29.15


MEMBERS ABSENT: T. Fritter (Excused)


At 2:30PM, Chair Kutz called the meeting to order and instructed the Secretary to record those present. Chair Kutz directed the attention of the Committee members to the draft Minutes of the previous meeting.

Mr. Pond moved, seconded by Ms. Hilmanowski, to approve the draft Minutes of the previous meeting. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Kutz paused for public comments. Ms. Meinholz offered congratulations to Ms. Czynszak-Lyne regarding her pending retirement and taking sabbatical at the end of the month. Ms. Czynszak-Lyne replied that she was not retiring despite the persistence of rumors. Ms. Meinholz responded that in that case she was glad she offered the comments so the correction could be made.

Congressional Representative Susan Forrester stated that she would like the committee to pursue a discussion of the ability to grieve a performance evaluation.

Mr. Patrick Sheehan of the Office of Human Resources clarified that the contents of an evaluation are generally not grieveable unless they are discriminatory or out of compliance with the policy itself. Mr. Sheehan noted that training for supervisors as it relates to evaluations is ongoing.

Discussion was heard that when it comes to evaluations the employees appear to be at a disadvantage.

Mr. Sheehan responded that a rebuttal to evaluations is permitted. Ms. Czynszak-Lyne noted that in regard to evaluations, she has usually counseled against taking such actions as they do not produce the desired result the employee hopes to see.

Chair Kutz recognized Vice Provost Patrick Sims and Ms. Traci Gaydos for the purpose of discussing the upcoming Diversity Forum. Vice Provost Sims noted the booking of Clarence Page on short notice to serve as the Keynote speaker after a scheduling crisis with the original speaker. Mr. Sims stated that he hopes University Staff takes part in the conference and that breakout sessions are broad enough to create a large appeal.

Question was raised as to the invitation and revocation of the invitation of Congressional Liaison Jake Rebholz as it related to participating in a breakout session panel.
Reply came that the initial response to the proposed panel was different than originally anticipated but a compromise was worked out which will now include Mr. Rebholz serving as a moderator.

Question was raised in terms of the balance of types of panel participants with the notation that it appears very heavy with Faculty and very few University Staff.

Reply came that FP&M representatives continue to present a difficult challenge in terms of booking for such events due to working off shifts but overtures were made to include front-line employees.

Discussion was heard that the make-up of the panels appears to reinforce the original criticism of the diversity report document that was aimed for a specific audience that did not include the vast majority of University Staff.

Reply came that outreach will be ongoing to University Staff and that next year session will be planned to make it accessible to off-shifts.

Mr. Patrick Sheehan of OHR noted that the panel that Mr. Rebholz is moderating is made up almost entirely of University Staff.

Response came that University Staff represented are HR professionals and custodial services cannot participate because they are already working short staffed.

Provost Sims encouraged those members critical of the event and of the Vice Provost for Diversity office to participate in an official capacity.

Response came that those critical of the report and process are afraid that the existence of the reports and events themselves are being used as an excuse that progress is satisfactory even though it is mostly cosmetic.

Provost Sims repeated his invitation to work with those who are critical of the efforts. Discussion was heard among committee members that the criticism should be matched with action.

Response came from those critical that they did not want their names associated with the material produced by the office.

Ms. Gaydos noted that local activists have also been invited to participate in this year session and that there will be two discussions in regard to the ‘Go Big Read’ book project. Ms. Gaydos noted that in regards to herself, she is new to campus and open to feedback. Ms. Gaydos then provided the committee with promotional materials for the event.

Vice Provost Sims concluded by saying that a diversity inventory will be conducted to coordinate a synergy of efforts on campus and pledged to return to the Executive Committee at their invitation to continue the discussion.

Chair Kutz recognized Ms. Czynszak-Lyne and Mr. Whitesel for the purpose of a report on the strategic planning session. Ms. Czynszak –Lyne reported that the session was organized in such a way that after
an opening statement by UW-System President Ray Cross, tables were put together for discussion purposes. Mr. Whitesel noted that the two most used words were “global” and “partnership”.

Chair Kutz recognized Ms. Czynszak-Lyne and Mr. Rebholz for the purpose to providing a report on the meeting with the campus OMBUDS. Ms. Czynszak-Lyne noted that the OMBUDS office was seeking information that could be shared with incoming staff as turnover is anticipated in the near future.

Mr. Rebholz noted that he felt excluded upon conclusion of the scheduled meeting when Mr. Kutz and Ms. Czynszak-Lyne remained in the meeting space and shut the door behind him after he left. Mr. Kutz assured Mr. Rebholz that the topics covered in the second meeting were Union Steward business and unrelated to the first meeting. Mr. Rebholz concluded by reporting that he had invited the OMBUDS representatives to participate in a future Congress meeting as a scheduled appearance. The Secretary noted that a representative of the OMBUDS has been scheduled to appear at a future meeting of the Congressional Communications Committee to discuss outreach.

Chair Kutz recognized the Secretary for a report to the Committee. The Secretary noted that the office had received a complimentary email message regarding the blog from a member of the Faculty. In addition, the Secretary reported that the Chancellor had released a tweet based on the blog entry regarding the work of University Staff on the east elevation of Bascom Hall renovation.

Chair Kutz noted in his report that the University Committee of the Faculty was using the Congressional Resolution on fetal tissue /stem cell line research as a model for their own resolution.

Chair Kutz recognized Congressional Liaison, Jake Rebholz, for the purpose of reviewing the agenda of the upcoming meeting of Congress. Mr. Rebholz noted that the Chancellor will appear at the November meeting and that the debate over the hostile and intimidating behavior policy continues with an amendment on the floor and under discussion.

Chair Kutz recognized Mr. Mark Walters of the Office of Human Resources for the purpose of providing an update regarding the titling and compensation study. Mr. Walters began with the background of the proposal, noting that conducting such a study was part of the strategic plan for HR Design. An Advisory Council will be formed in the near future which will include Russell Kutz as the Representative for the UW-Madison campus University Staff. The timeline for the study is estimated to be between 18 to 24 months before results can be produced. Mr. Walters noted that the plan is for the Advisory Council to hold their first meeting before the end of the year.

Question was raised as to the role of the business school in conducting the study. Reply came that while the school was consulted in terms of laying out the scope of the study in order to help with assembling and RFP in order to acquire an outside agency they will not be conducting the study itself. Mr. Walters described the project as a “large and collaborative activity” of which all governance groups will be a part of.

Question was raised if the Advisory Council will provide input on the structure of the RFP. Reply was in the affirmative.
Question was raised as to how this study will affect Trades employees. Reply came that the Trades will be examined versus other Trades employees to see if they are being treated in a similar way.

Question was raised as to the target date for the start of the study. Reply came that the kickoff of the Advisory Council will serve as the official start of the effort and the goal is to get an RFP issued after the first of the year which means the study may be underway by late spring.

Question was raised if the study could result in a recommendation for salary cuts. Reply came that such a result is not envisioned nor likely based on the experience of having examined similar studies.

Discussion was heard that employees are now anticipating the worst from such initiatives. Reply came that every effort will be made to address such fears in communication outreach.

Mr. John Newton arrived.

Chair Kutz opened discussion on the Charge of the Committee on Work Rules. Chair Kutz noted his belief that the Charge needed to include more introductory information than is normally seen in Charges as other campus shared governance groups are being asked to participate.

Question was raised if the composition of the committee should be expanded to include both a designated student and graduate student. Reply came that the ASM Chair has expressed no interest in this regard.

Question was raised as to the background of the initiative. Reply came that the idea was reviewed as part of the submitted and discussed 'To-Do list' when it was noted that work rules are not necessarily up to date or currently being guided in accordance with the strategic framework.

Question was raised if the matter of a committee is being dealt with in the proper place and if the ‘To-Do list’ itself was meant for the Executive Committee or for the Congress and that there has been a recent history of consistently shifting the responsibility of creating committees to the Congress and away from the Executive Committee. Reply came that the proposed Charge allow for greater buy-in on a campus wide basis and therefore, potentially more interest from the Administration.

Discussion was heard that when committee members are selected, it should follow the pattern of soliciting applications from the entire staff and then having those applications reviewed by the Nominations Committee to make selections. Discussion was heard that members of Congress will not being excluded from applying to serve on the committee.

Discussion was heard that the language of the Charge is unwieldy and the Charge itself is too long. Reply came that the Charge is viewed as more transparent than other recent Charges as it is more specific than others have been.

Discussion was heard that approval of the Charge should be postponed until the Office of Human Resources can be consulted about their potential level of cooperation with the planned committee. Reply came that OHR has been consulted and is waiting for shared governance to act.
Ms. Czynszak-Lyne moved, seconded by Mr. Droes, to approve the Charge of the Committee on Work Rules.

Discussion was heard that there is no urgent need to proceed on the approval of the Charge and a postponement would be preferable. Discussion was heard that the creation of such a committee is an excuse by the Executive Committee to prove they still have authority. Reply came that it is proper for the Executive Committee to form committees and approve the Charges of those committees and that there is still a role for the Executive Committee to play.

Discussion was heard that the Charge was not drafted in the spirit of transparency and insufficient time was allocated to read and discuss the details it contained. Objection was heard as to the characterization that the process lacked transparency and that such a statement is being made too often and for the wrong reasons. Reply came that the Charge was issued within a proper timeframe to allow members to review it.

All in favor of the motion to approve the Charge, with the exception of Meinholz, Newton and Hilmanowski, who voted in the negative.

Chair Kutz opened discussion on proposed survey questions which were reviewed and re-drafted by the Communications Committee.

Discussion was heard that questions as they are currently drafted lack objectivity, particularly the question that begins with the words, “I understand…”

Discussion was heard as to what the goals of the survey are and how those goals relate to the questions.

Discussion was heard that a question should be included that reads: “do you know how to get involved in shared governance?”

Discussion was heard that the “I’s” should be removed and questions ended with a question mark.

Discussion was heard that the questions are too basic to result in any useful data.

At 4:05pm, Mr. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Meinholz, to adjourn the meeting. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary