MINUTES

UW-Madison Classified Staff Congress

4.20.15

All members recorded as ‘present’ with the following exceptions:

Excused Absent: S. Strang (103), A. Schueller (134), R. Childs (140), M. Diebold (149), J. Rebholz (161), T. Callaci (167), J. Kind (178), J. Cooper (185), B. Koerber (188), D. Esquivel Vindas (206), T. Droes (CSEC – 7).

Absent: D. McNicol (114), A. Yingling (128), C. Larson (130), D. Dhondup (141), J. Moreno (143), J. Santoyo Zamora (144), P. Dowd (148), J. Bergeman (150)

In addition, 7 Alternates were present.

At 2:30PM, Vice Chancellor Bazzell called the meeting to order and noted that a quorum was present.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell asked if there was a motion to approve the draft Minutes of the meeting 16 March. Motion to approve was heard. A second to the motion was heard. Vote was called on the motion. All voted in favor with the notation of an abstention. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell asked if there was a motion to approve the draft Minutes of the special session meeting of 23 March. Motion to approve was heard. A second to the motion was heard. Vote was called on the motion. All voted in favor with the notation of an abstention. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell invited any persons without voting status in the Congress to address the body under ‘Public Comments’.

Mr. Luis Martinez, Alternate for District 143, addressed the Congress questioning why experienced employees were subject to termination and new persons hired to replace them. Mr. Martinez questioned the strategy of such actions and expressed concern for his own position, saying that he has received positive feedback on how he trains employees but remains concerned about his future.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell responded by instructing Mr. Patrick Sheehan of the Office of Human Resources to personally discuss with Mr. Martinez his specific concerns.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell opened his remarks to Congress by directing their attention to the ‘Strategic Framework’ document which was provided to each member, and urged each member to familiarize themselves with the contents.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell continued his remarks by acknowledging the Friday blog post by Chancellor Blank that referenced planned job cuts. Vice Chancellor Bazzell noted that the State Budget implementation process is long and still underway. Vice Chancellor Bazzell said the best way to keep up to date with Budget changes is to examine the campus website dedicated to the budget.
Representative of District 102 noted that in her department there were five open positions but found this confusing as she was under the impression that vacancies would not be filled.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell responded that there is no campus prohibition on filling vacancies. Deans and Directors have discretion to fill positions based on priorities.

Representative of District 102 made an inquiry regarding permissive transfers.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell responded that any position reduced or filled between now and the first of the year will follow all currently existing HR work rules.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 inquired how many of the announced layoffs are positions and how many are people.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell responded that the majority are currently unfilled positions but did not know the precise number in this regard.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 inquired as to when ‘at-risk’ letters might be sent.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell responded that such letters would be issued by the individual Deans and Directors and up to each work unit based on their own cycles, but some could come as early as next week.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 clarified that those laid off before July 1st would be subject to existing rules.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell acknowledged that as correct.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 acknowledged that today was ‘Earth Day’, which was founded by former US Senator and Wisconsin Governor, Gaylord Nelson.

(Applause heard in the hall)

Vice Chancellor Bazzell recognized Mr. Russell Kutz for the purpose of providing a report from the Classified Staff Executive Committee.

Mr. Kutz thanked Mr. Mike Bradley for his service on the Classified Staff Executive Committee, from which he recently resigned.

(Applause heard in the hall)

Mr. Kutz welcomed and introduced Mr. John Newton, who will be serving in Mr. Bradley’s vacated spot of CSEC Seat 2.

(Applause heard in the hall)

Mr. Kutz noted that Congressional election ballots will be mailed to homes on 4 May and are due postmarked or returned by 25 May.
Mr. Kutz asked members of Congress to pick up and display a ‘Jewish American Heritage Month’ poster if they had not done so already.

Mr. Kutz announced the HR Design brown bag session on performance Management and encouraged attendance.

Representative of District 122 noted that 36 seats in Congress remain vacant and expressed concern about how the absence of these seats will be addressed.

Mr. Kutz replied that Congressional Districting will be addressed in the Congressional Bylaws, but as of now there is no plan in place to address how to fill vacant districts.

Representative of District 122 stated that it was imperative that CSEC complete a plan to fill vacant seats, and suggested the possible action of consolidating districts. Representative of District 122 noted that he had expressed similar concerns last year.

Representative of CSEC Seat 1 stated that as a body Congress may wish to empower CSEC to appoint vacant seats prior to the confirmation of the bylaws.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 noted that CSEC has discussed such issues at length and has most recently suggested providing an ‘exit interview’ style survey to outgoing members of congress to gain a greater understanding of the situation.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 stated that it is up to Congress to take action regarding vacancies through their bylaws unless it empowers CSEC to do so.

Representative of District 109 suggested that an Ad Hoc Committee from Congress and CSEC meet as soon as possible to discuss the problem.

Representative of District 201 noted that she was not seeking re-election because she was unaware of her own job status in this current period of layoffs and further noted that when she is away from her workplace problems arise in her absence and she believed this situation is typical of classified staff. Representative of District 201 concluded that until classified staff gets the respect it deserves for its professionalism that this situation will continue.

(Applause heard in the hall)

Representative of District 108 questioned how the committees will make districting determinations. Congress agendas have failed to address how bylaws and districting will be addressed.

Mr. Kutz responded that agendas are the responsibility of the Congressional Liaison who discusses priorities with CSEC. Mr. Kutz noted that HR Design policies are currently getting the priority for placement on the agenda.
Representative of CSEC Seat 5 noted that the construction and functioning of shared governance groups is an ongoing learning process, and noted that the possibility of a mid-point election for vacant seats has been discussed.

Representative of CSEC Seat 1 noted that the Congressional Bylaws Committee is currently reviewing a draft and welcomes any comments or suggestions from Congress members.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell opened discussion on the Probationary Period Policy draft. Vice Chancellor Bazzell noted that upon consultation with the Parliamentarian it was agreed that debate should resume on the Amendment offered from the Representative of CSEC Seat 5, rather than on the Amendment to the Amendment from the Representative of District 142. The latter will be properly debated upon the passage of the former.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 spoke in favor of the amendment noting that 90 days is a typical private industry standard and that a longer probationary period will present recruiting difficulties. Representative of CSEC Seat 5 concluded that for most jobs a 3 month probation is a sufficient evaluation period.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 stated her strong opposition to the amendment and that there is a need to see employees interact in different cycles of the work year but noted that a 6 month probationary period could be lowered to 3 months if the supervisor sees fit.

Representative of District 171 noted they shared some of the concerns regarding a 3 month probationary period that were already expressed.

Representative of District 133 noted that the amendment sets the 3 month probation as a minimum and does not lock every job into a 3 month total probation.

Representative of District 194 referenced the information distributed prior to the meeting that summarized the statements of her constituents in opposition to a 3 month period.

Representative of District 109 spoke in support of a 6 month probationary period but expressed support for lowering it to 3 with permission from OHR.

Representative of District 197 spoke in support of the amendment for 3 months stating that most jobs don’t require a 6 month period of evaluation and training and that the key to the amendment is that 3 months is a minimum time rather than a maximum.

Representative of District 151 asked if there was a way that a 3 month probation could be extended.

Reply came from Mr. Patrick Sheehan of OHR that there are circumstances in which a 3 month probation could be extended but there are some limitations.

Representative of District 142 inquired as to why benefits would not be allowed during the three month probation.
Representative of District 108 spoke in favor of the amendment noting that new onboarding policies should be useful in getting employees up to speed.

Representative of District 168 spoke in favor of the amendment noting that a 6 month period would likely be detrimental to recruitment and agreed that performance management policies and onboarding policies will be useful in a 3 month probation period environment.

Representative of District 192 stated that employee onboarding is designed as a yearlong process as is performance management and does not speak to probationary periods.

Representative of District 175 asked for clarification as it related to “select titles” could the minimum period be 3 months but requested longer from the start.

Mr. Sheehan replied that it is envisioned that there would be longer periods that would be indicated that the time of hire.

Representative of District 176 spoke in favor of the amendment with the knowledge that a supervisor could request a longer probation period.

Representative of District 170 spoke in favor of a 3 month period as long it includes flexibility.

Representative of District 192 stated that a 6 month period would be adequate time and would avoid potential disparity of probationary periods for a selected title if left to the supervisor to decide.

Representative of District 133 clarified that the probation period would be defined by the selected title rather than by supervisors.

Mr. Sheehan replied that the probationary period would line up with the duties of the working title and not by individual basis.

Representative of District 200 ask for clarification in setting probationary periods for selected titles in multiple units.

Mr. Sheehan replied that OHR will determine the selected titles to be uniform across all units but do not limit specific positions that would need further analysis to set the probationary period.

Representative of District 200 spoke in favor of a 6 month period and stated that most training may take more than 3 months to complete.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell called a vote on the motion. Nays were ruled to be in majority after a hand count of credential cards. An abstention was also recorded. MOTION FAILED.

Representative of District 183 shared personal experience with having student workers, LTEs and projects and hiring them as full-time employees and stated that they should be able to have a shorter probationary period.
Representative of District 183 motioned to give division or supervisor an option waive to shorten probation period after a performance review of the employee. Motion is seconded.

Representative of CSEC Seat 1 stated that the option waive of the probationary period for LTEs and projects would supersede other permanent staff.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 stated in opposition that all classified staff should serve the same probation period.

Representative of District 174 agree with wording except the first sentence

Representative of District 142 spoke in favor of having all classified staff serve the same probationary period and offered the same benefits.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell noted that the benefits are not dependent on Probationary status.

Representative of District 142 stated that the probationary period should not be up to the supervisor.

Representative of District 200 stated their work unit has a number of LTE positions and the way it is written it is not in the hands of the work unit. Representative stated they were not comfortable with that aspect.

Representative of District 120 stated there is a need for additional language to define the time period of how long the students, LTEs and Projects worked before hired as a full-time employee.

Representative of District 152 shared personal experience with working as an LTE for 4 years and stated there is a need for a language change to add 6 months as an appropriate amount of time for the probationary period of students, LTEs and Projects.

Representative of District 151 stated that student positions going into Projects or full-time should complete the 6 month probationary period due to the different tasks involved.

Representative of CSEC Seat 1 stated that the Temporary Student Program will not allow others to compete for a “spot” and be taken by an LTE or a student employee.

Representative of District 109 stated the policy would apply after hire and asks for clarification about “losing a spot.”

Representative of District 120 stated that the amendment applies to after reviewing, selecting and hiring the candidate.

Representative of CSEC Seat 1 stated temporary, student hourly and Projects employee are at-will employees and would not be allowed to compete when a vacancy is open.

Representative of District 197 spoke in opposition to the amendment and stated that a 6 month probation would be the training period for the new hire and that the probation period should be standard for all employees.
Vice Chancellor Bazzell stated that the positioning question would go through a process that is whether the student hire, LTE or project employee, based on the duties performed, can have their probationary period waived.

Representative of District 176 moved to separate the first and the second sentences of the proposed amendment for the purpose of each being treated as a separate amendment to be debated and voted on. Second was heard.

Vice Chancellor Bazzell called for the Ayes and Nays. Ayes were ruled to be in the majority. MOTION CARRIED.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 spoke in opposition. A project can get a job without probation creates a caste system worse than what already exists.

Representative of District 200 stated this will open the floodgates to “hurt” feelings and create animosity.

Representative of District 198 spoke in opposition to the amendment stating that it will create a double standard.

Representative of District 133 spoke in opposition to the amendment as being too vague.

Representative of District 151 spoke in opposition to the amendment.

VCFA called for a vote. Nays were ruled to be in the majority and an abstention was recorded. MOTION FAILED.

Representative of District 200 spoke in opposition as there are no safeguards.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 agreed with previous speakers and stated there was too great an opportunity for favoritism.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 stated that he hopes those who spoke in opposition citing favoritism remember their arguments when the RAS policy is before the Congress.

Vice Chancellor called for a vote, Nays were ruled to be in majority and an abstention was recorded. MOTION FAILED.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 stated that as the Congress can form a committee any time that it wishes to do so he wished to create an Ad Hoc Committee to study Probationary Periods.

Representative of CSEC Seat 1 moved to extend the proceedings by 10 minutes. A second to the motion was heard.

Ayes were ruled to be in majority and an abstention was heard. MOTION CARRIED.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 called the question as amended. A second was heard.
Ayes were ruled to be in the majority with an abstention being recorded. MOTION CARRIED.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 moved to create an Ad Hoc Committee on Probationary Periods to consist of 7 members of the Congress as selected by the Nominations Committee.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 questioned the legitimacy of the motion. Motion was ruled to be in order.

Representative of CSEC Seat 9 questioned if the body had the necessary expertise on the subject.

Representative of District 198 questioned whether the forming of the Ad Hoc committee on Probationary Period is timely.

Representative of District 200 stated they did not see the point of the committee at this time and questioned it as not being timely.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 stated that he believed classified staff shared governance has the ability to productively discuss the matter with HR experts and draw their own conclusions.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 concerned that bylaws are not yet in affect and the Congress should concentrate its time on policies and procedures up for review.

Representative of District 190 suggested the absence of a quorum.

Secretary confirmed that a quorum remained present.

Representative of CSEC Seat 4 stated that the decision on such a committee did not have to be made today.

Representative of CSEC Seat 5 moved to postpone action on the motion until the next regular Congress meeting. A second to the motion was heard. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

At 4:07PM, Representative of District 133 moved to adjourn the meeting. All in favor with the notation of an abstention. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary