MINUTES
University Staff Congress Meeting
8.19.19

All members were present with the following exceptions:

EXCUSED: J. Ackerman (101), J. Marino (103), P. Cunniffe (111), M. Bradley (137), S. Baxter (154), M. Kenyon (171), K. O’Connor (193), L. Ketterhagen (202)

ABSENT: N. Hunter (102), M. Fennessy (177)

In addition, 7 Alternates were present.

At 2:30PM, Vice Chancellor Heller called the Congress meeting to order and welcomed its new members to the first meeting of the 6th Congress.

Vice Chancellor Heller paused to accept public comments. Ms. Consuelo Morales, Alternate for District 142, inquired if it would be possible to allow employees to complete the ‘Well Wisconsin’ questionnaire at the same time as the screening, as it is not convenient for employees without direct computer access to do so at separate times. Vice Chancellor Heller replied that he would investigate this through a conversation with the Office of Human Resources.

Vice Chancellor Heller informed the Congress that, without objection, he sought to take an Agenda item out of order based on the need for one of the speakers to depart on time in order to participate in another meeting. Without objection, Vice Chancellor Heller recognized Ms. Missy Nergard in order to provide a report on the STARS working group.

Ms. Nergard provided a definition of sustainability and described the STARS metric as it relates to Higher Education. Ms. Nergard noted that 62 relative indicators that campus is rated on sustainability represented in 4 different sections. It was noted that the STARS report would be submitted every two years. Ms. Nergard informed the Congress that each School and Division has its own Master Plan. Ms. Nergard also described the various emergencies, frequently weather related, that the campus had to respond to and described how to leverage campus resources in this regard.

Representative of District 123 inquired as to how successful the ‘ticket to table’ program had been and what sort of feedback had been received.

Reply came that the program had received significant positive feedback and had saved an estimated 300,000 containers.

Applause heard in the hall.

Vice Chancellor Heller returned to the original order of the Agenda and provided a report to Congress.
Vice Chancellor Heller introduced Ms. Elena Sidorenko, of the Office of the Secretary, who will be serving as the Parliamentarian now that Mr. Lance Raney, whom the Vice Chancellor thanked for his service, has been elected to a seat in Congress.

Vice Chancellor Heller informed the Congress that the State Budget provided $45 million in new money for the overall system and some important campus projects have been funded, including Sellery and Witte Halls renovations, as well as new construction in Veterinary Medicine. Vice Chancellor Heller noted that the 2% raise for employees will go into effect in January of 2020, as well as again in the following January. Vice Chancellor Heller also stated that $4 million would be available in one-time bonus and discretionary increase funds.

Vice Chancellor Heller reported that Mr. Karl Scholz is now serving in the position of Provost and John Horn has begun as Chief of Staff to the VCFA. Vice Chancellor Heller concluded his report by mentioning that the UW-Madison has been ranked as 25th in world rankings of research campuses.

Representative of District 162 asked for clarification in regard to discretionary compensation funds.

Reply came that they are available to both the Academic and the University Staff personnel.

Representative of District 152 noted that the Congress had not endorsed the STARS program as it had been alluded to earlier. Representative expressed concern in regard to transparency related to the awarding of discretionary compensation, and further noted that some may exploit two ways to acquire compensation while others receive none at all, which raises questions of fairness.

Reply came that pay programs in the past years have been presented in detail to the Congress and that there may be ways to examine greater transparency, but Divisions have been instructed to inform the staff of the methodology which will be utilized to provide compensation.

Representative of District 114 inquired that if there are not currently any good benchmarks in regard to staff salaries, how will this be addressed?

Reply came that this will be addressed in the Title and Total Compensation Project.

Representative of District 114 inquired as to how benchmarking is conducted for the Faculty.

Reply came that Universities rely on a method provided by the Association of American Universities which is utilized by research institutions.

Representative of District 179 inquired as to what guidelines were in place to ensure equal distribution of compensation so that there is not a replication of those who have always or never received it.

Reply came that no such guidelines are specific in this regard, but Division personnel are informed that they should be mindful of equity when proceeding.

Representative of District 179 stated that there should be a method to address those supervisors who do not act fairly.

Vice Chancellor Heller recognized Ms. Jenny Faust for the purpose of providing a briefing to the Congress regarding the Policy Library project.
Ms. Faust informed the Congress the Policy Library project is one of 75 projects currently underway on campus.

Ms. Faust stated that the Provost and the Office of Legal Affairs suggested pursuing the establishment of a Policy Library which would be an online collection at the University level. It was stated that the project is aiming for next fall to have a searchable library established. Ms. Faust noted that this project will not write or revise policies, described the difference between policies and procedures and also noted that best practices would be examined in order to create a standardized format.

Ms. Faust informed the Congress that the report for recommendations will be posted on the web and a comment period opened.

Representative of District 130 stated that as the Secretary of University Staff is essentially an Administrative post, to gather feedback from shared governance the Personnel Policies and Procedures Committee should be engaged directly.

Reply came that such a meeting would be welcome.

Representative of District 152 raised concern that the draft document of recommendations included language that leaves questions as to who decides what is policy and what isn’t. The Representative also inquired as to what powers the proposed ‘Policy Officer’ would have.

Reply came that there is no interest in reducing the number of policies, apart from the duplicates, and the only change is that final policies will be catalogued in a library.

Representative of District 152 noted that policies normally contain a stated one year review period.

Reply came that the Policy Library is supportive of a stated review date.

Representative of District 170 stated that they understood that the goal is not to impose policies, but rather to make them searchable in a database.

Reply came in the affirmative.

Representative of District 112 inquired whether the previous version would be eliminated from the library if a policy was changed.

Reply came that the best practice would be to include an archive that would include previous versions.

Ms. Faust concluded her report with thanks to the Congress.

Applause heard in the hall.

Vice Chancellor Heller recognized Mr. Mark Walters for the purpose of providing an update regarding the Title and Total Compensation project.

Mr. Walters began his remarks by welcoming the members of the 6th Congress and praised the positive past relationship between the Administration and the previous Congresses.

Mr. Walters reviewed the goals of the TTC, which he summarized as creating a market informed compensation structure with titles that reflect what employees are actually doing along with a benefits package that is responsive to the needs of employees.
Mr. Walters informed the Congress that three streams in the project were currently underway. This included creation of titles, mapping positions, and implementation of a new compensation structure. Mr. Walters also stated that training and engagement have been ongoing and that an appeal process will be put in place.

Mr. Walters introduced Mr. Brian Steen to describe the current challenges related to benchmarking. Mr. Steen noted that employee/manager discussions will take place between November and February with the goal of having the direct manager or supervisor developing the position description.

Representative of District 114 asked for clarification as to how Trades employees would be treated differently.

Reply came that benchmarking is being done in regard to Trades employees.

Representative of District 119 thanked Mr. Walters for the presentation and for the recent employee forums and inquired if supervisors will be given mandatory training in regard to their responsibilities for creating position descriptions.

Reply came that training will be available and completion of it encouraged, but it would not be mandatory as some may not have the ability to attend training, but conversations will take place and managers and employees should be equipped as much as possible via micro learning sessions which will be introduced.

Representative of District 119 spoke in favor of mandatory training, as their top concern was not the managers with limited access to mandatory training, but rather those who do have access, and choose not to take it.

Representative of District 147 expressed concern that the model based on prevailing wage is no longer in use and stated that benefits should be the same as other public employees.

Reply acknowledged that Trades employees are paying a full premium for their benefits.

Representative of District 147 noted that for Trades employees, the policies regarding sick leave and vacation come from the Department of Administration of the State of Wisconsin.

Reply came that options will be looked at going forward.

Representative of District 162 inquired about the reclassification of an employee from University to Academic Staff.

Reply came that the project is looking to solve the impediments that exist in regard to moving between the two groups.

Representative of District 132 inquired how to resolve an issue with a supervisor should one arise during discussions of position descriptions.

Reply came that a process is being designed in this regard.

Representative of District 150 stated that while they have attended forums, the issues regarding Trades employees have not been discussed there and suggested a forum dedicated to Trades employees.

Response to suggestion was positive.
Representative of District 179 inquired if governance will be represented in the appeals process.

Reply came in the affirmative, but noted that the design of the process is still underway.

Representative of District 174 expressed concern of constituents regarding compression and that persons are asked to train incoming employees who make more than they do.

Reply came that the goal is not to compress levels but to describe work to bench mark so it can be brought to market.

Representative of District 174 inquired if funds would be available to meet discovered bench marks.

Vice Chancellor Heller replied that he is charged with making campus a financially robust place and to be prepared to address fiscal issues.

Representative of District 112 spoke regarding the challenges of matching the private sector to the public employees and stated that he hoped the goal of the Project would be to not only make the campus competitive in wages, but attractive to potential applicants.

Reply acknowledged the remarks made.

At 4:00PM, Vice Chancellor Heller entertained a motion to adjourn. Motion was heard, as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary