

MINUTES

University Staff Congress

10.18.21

PRESENT: All members were present with the following exceptions –

EXCUSED ABSENT: W. Clifton (1), D. Creasy (2), H. Wei (9), J. Priebe (18), C. Butler (21), K. Runge (23), M. Polk-McGiveron (24), B. Holbach (32), S. Woodworth (47), M. Avery (60), P. Jochimsen (69), R. Kutz (83), E. Schafer (100)

ABSENT: C. Rohde-Szudy (16), A. Slobounov (29), J. Moe (36), P. Hanson (41), J. Swisher (50), T. Bresnahan (56), K. Jesuthasan (61), T. Valtin-Ewin (91), J. Valeo (92), R. Orzel (93)

In addition, 2 Alternates were present.

At 2:30PM, Vice Chancellor Cramer announced that a quorum was present, declared the meeting in session and called it to order.

Vice Chancellor Cramer paused for public comments. None sought recognition in this regard.

Vice Chancellor Cramer provided a report to the Congress in which he acknowledged the recent communication from the Chancellor which affirmed the importance and the right of staff to participate in shared governance. Vice Chancellor Cramer also noted that the 2% pay plan is anticipated to be approved before January. Vice Chancellor Cramer continued his report by informing the Congress that the Search and Screen for the Facilities Planning and Management Associate Vice Chancellor which began in August will soon bring the finalists for the position to campus. Vice Chancellor Cramer concluded his remarks by noting that he will be having a conversation with the Central Committee regarding real estate strategies. In regard to sustainability, Vice Chancellor Cramer noted that the food waste solutions group is reviewing the results of their recent study. Vice Chancellor Cramer also provided updates regarding the L&S building which will be built between 2023 and 2025, as well as the Computer Science building which is on an expedited schedule to be completed in 2024. Vice Chancellor Cramer also noted that the Well Being center will be open late 2022. Vice Chancellor Cramer concluded by providing clarifications regarding Remote Work Policy, Flex Policy and Workplace Flexibility.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Dr. LeVar Charleston for the purpose of providing a report to Congress.

Dr. Charleston provided information in regard to his background, education and career and reviewed his vision for the office. Dr. Charleston reviewed in detail the four pillars of UW's Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, which were Asset-based approaches, Research Informed Practices, Organizational Excellence, and Campus & Community Engagement. Dr. Charleston also reviewed the status of the R.E.E.L Change 10-year plan.

Representative of District 7 asked who could be contacted regarding increasing outreach as it relates to job openings to increase the chances of diversifying the workplace.

Reply came that you could contact the DDEEA office directly and they will work with the persons responsible in your department.

Representative of District 11 asked if Dr. Charleston had identified community allies for his work, since developments, either positive or negative, either on campus or in the community, were likely to have an impact on one another.

Reply came that partnerships have been cultivated with a number of persons and organizations, including Boys and Girls Club, the Urban League, and the YWCA. Dr. Charleston noted that outreach work of this type is ongoing without often being announced. Dr. Charleston noted that he had recently attended a celebratory event with the Hmong community.

Representative of District 52 expressed concern that despite being the most diverse group on campus, the University Staff employees are often overlooked and left out of the conversations, particularly those on 'off' shifts.

Reply came that those shifts in question need more attention and that a more holistic approach and listening sessions would be helpful in this regard.

Representative of District 46 expressed concern that employees on 2nd and 3rd shift have limited access to computers and limited training when it comes to navigating UW websites and thus often miss out on announcements of events from which they could benefit. Representative of District 46 expressed concern that the time allocated for staff to check their emails is inadequate.

Reply came that this issue would be examined in a conversation with Administration leadership.

Dr. Charleston concluded his remarks with thanks to the Congress.

(applause heard in the hall)

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Associate University Librarian for Public Services, Ms. Lesley Moyo, for the purpose of providing a report to Congress.

Ms. Moyo noted that upon arriving on campus she was impressed with the interest in lifelong learning among the staff. Ms. Moyo stated that the librarians do not differentiate between users and assist all individuals the same in their pursuit of discovery. Ms. Moyo provided details on campus libraries, noting that they have materials in more than 510 languages and that the UW is a government depository library and that materials can be accessed throughout Big 10 campuses. Ms. Moyo reminded the Congress that materials can be checked out for an entire semester and borrowing extends beyond the employee to the spouse or domestic partner. Ms. Moyo described the operations of the library during the pandemic and also described the process by which staff can use their Wiscard ID and Net ID to access both hard copy and electronic materials.

Representative of District 88 inquired as to the prospect of libraries being open on a 24-hour basis, noting that this was a previous request by the Associated Students of Madison.

Reply came that the College Library was operating on a 24-hour, 5-day a week basis until the pandemic and those operations are hoping to be restored at that particular location.

Representative of District 95 inquired how the Library might reach out more effectively to the staff, many of whom are under the impression that libraries are only for Faculty and Students and are intimidated at the prospect of inquiring for materials.

Reply came that the libraires recognize they need to convey a more user-friendly image and dispel myths about whom they serve. Ms. Moyo welcomed any outreach suggestions that members of Congress might have.

Representative of District 64 stated that it would be beneficial for staff to receive instructions on how to navigate the Libraries website.

Reply came in agreement that such instruction would prove beneficial.

Ms. Moyo concluded her remarks by thanking the Congress for the invitation to take part in their proceedings.

(applause heard in the hall)

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Mr. Terry Fritter, Chair of the Bylaws Committee, for the purpose of providing a report to Congress.

Mr. Fritter reminded the Congress that the Bylaws Committee had unanimously approved submitting to Congress an Amendment of Section 1.03B in regard to holding meetings via correspondence, for the months of December, January and February. Mr. Fritter noted that the Congress passed the motion to adopt the Amendment at their most recent meeting and that the procedure stipulates that it be passed with a two-thirds majority vote at the subsequent meeting. Mr. Fritter urged a vote in favor of the motion.

(applause heard in the hall)

Vice Chancellor Cramer entertained a motion to approve the proposed Amendment. A motion was heard, as was a second.

Representative of District 33 inquired if there was precedence for cancelling meetings due to inclement weather.

Reply came from Mr. Fritter that in the past inclement weather had resulted in the cancellation of a meeting on the same day it was to take place as staff was called away for operational needs and safety concerns for those who would try to travel to the meeting.

Representative of District 66 spoke in support of the motion but noted that his concern was not as much related to weather conditions as it was in regard to in person meetings still scheduled after the identification of new and more virulent strains of COVID. Representative of District 66 noted in particular his concern for those attending meetings who have children at home who have not yet reached vaccination age.

Vice Chancellor Cramer called a voice vote on the motion. There were not any votes to be heard in opposition. Vice Chancellor Cramer declared that the motion had passed with the required two-thirds required and the Bylaws would be amended.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Ms. Molly Lenz, Chair for the Central Committee for the purpose of providing a report to Congress.

Ms. Lenz noted that she continues to attend regular meetings with campus and shared governance leadership, and she welcomed any input members of Congress had in terms of issue items that people would like brought up for discussion, both in these discussions and for future Agenda items of Congress.

Ms. Lenz also reminded the Congress that 27 October is the deadline to submit nominations for the Elizabeth S. Pringle Award and that the Central Committee would meet 28 October and invited either participation at the meeting or suggestions to be sent prior to the meeting.

Representative of District 64 expressed his desire for a discussion to be had in regard to an alternative health plan for employees.

Reply came that Ms. Lenz had made note of the request and would continue to accept suggestions after the meeting.

(applause heard in the hall)

Vice Chancellor Cramer opened the floor for questions in regard to the report he had previously provided.

Representative of District 52 inquired if members of shared governance would have the opportunity to interact with Associate Vice Chancellor of FP&M finalists.

Reply came in the affirmative.

Representative of District 52 stressed the need for timeliness in terms of notification in this regard so that staff can take part.

Representative of District 52 expressed his concern of what he believed the negative impact on employees participating in shared governance to be as it related to the use of 'without loss of pay' versus being in 'pay status' when it comes to participation in meetings and events. Representative of District 52 asked if the Vice Chancellor would be willing to discuss this at a future meeting of the Central Committee.

Reply came in the affirmative.

Representative of District 52 expressed his concern in regard to the fairness of proposed discretionary merit pay for employees, stating that there was a lack of transparency in regard to who received the funds and how such determinations had been made. Representative of District 52 also expressed his concern in regard to those employees in non-101 funding workplaces.

Representative of District 52 expressed his concern that a change implemented through HR Design made it no longer possible for employees to sell back vacation time, although such an ability would be of great benefit to staff, particularly now.

Reply came that Vice Chancellor Cramer would inquire as to the historical background and current status of these policies and concerns in a conversation with OHR.

Representative of District 65 expressed concern that those who do not received discretionary increases are not informed as to why they did not and are often unaware that they were even eligible until long after the period of awarding such increases passes.

Representative of District 40 noted that a repair order for the clock in Room 272 needs to be filed as it is not currently working.

Representative of District 49 inquired as to the status of pay for the Trades employees.

Reply came that while it has been approved by the Board of Regents, the Joint Committee on Employment Relations has not yet taken action.

Representative of District 66 expressed concern that qualifications for discretionary pay increases are linked to the completion of mandatory online training, yet many of the lowest wage workers have limited access to computers and insufficient time necessary to complete such training. Representative of District 66 noted that access to information is considered by many to be a universal human right.

Vice Chancellor Cramer entertained a motion to adjourn. A motion was heard, as was a second. All in Favor. Motion Carried.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary