

MINUTES

University Staff Congress

10.17.22

All Members were present with the following exceptions:

EXCUSED: D. Creasey (2), A. Young (20), M. Polk McGiveron (24), S. Frey (40), S. Newton (51), V. Werla (53), M. Stiemke (55), K. Demick (64), J. Watson (67), E. Schuck (78), R. Ness (82), R. Kutz (83), E. Schafer (100)

ABSENT: M. Vandenbrook (26), K. O'Neill (37), G. Jensen (46), J. Swisher (50), K. Owens (89),

In addition, 1 Alternate was present.

At 2:30PM, Vice Chancellor Cramer called the meeting to order.

Vice Chancellor Cramer directed the attention of the Congress to the draft Minutes of the previous meeting. A motion was heard to approve the Minutes as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Vice Chancellor Cramer provided a report to Congress in which he noted that the Administration had released a statement in support of shared governance. Vice Chancellor Cramer also reminded the Congress that October is Cybersecurity Month and that everyone should complete the required training in this regard. Vice Chancellor Cramer commented on the progress being made to increase computer access and that the 2nd and 3rd Shift Committee will soon be provided with a report in this regard. Vice Chancellor Cramer concluded his report by noting that finalists for the OHR position will likely be on campus in mid-November and employees may participate in public sessions with them without loss of pay.

Representative of District 58 spoke of the importance in keeping lines of communication between the Administration and the employees open as it relates to snow removal.

Reply came that the current practice will remain under review to meet the needs of both the campus and employees.

Representative of District 69 emphasized the need to verify the legitimacy of incoming emails from the sender, particularly when they are worded with a sense of urgency.

Representative of District 52 noted the historical decline in State support for public education and the discrepancy of funds allocated to provide a raise in wages versus the funds made available to fund the separation pay of an outgoing football coach.

Reply came that the Athletic program funds are acquired through private donors.

Representative of District 52 thanked the Vice Chancellor for his support and recognition of Custodial Recognition Week. Representative of District 52 noted his disappointment regarding the policy that prevents food from being taken off premises that might otherwise benefit those employees who are unable to leave their workplace to take part in events where refreshments are offered. Representative of

District 52 also informed the Vice Chancellor that he continues to receive feedback from his and other constituents regarding the inadequacy of a 2% raise to keep pace with the cost of living, the unfairness of the current parking arrangements, and the inequity between those employees who must report for work in person and those working remotely. Representative of District 52 also inquired as to the status of a flag for the campus.

(applause heard in the hall)

Representative of District 31 expressed concern of his constituents that employees are being hired in at a higher wage rate than some of those already working here.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Steve Ackerman, Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education, for the purpose of providing a report to Congress.

Vice Chancellor Ackerman described the organization and function of his office and noted that research is growing at a good rate, which would not have been possible without the work and support of university staff that labors in jobs which require 24 hour duties.

Representative of District 76 inquired if there is a plan to bring stability to Research and Sponsored Programs, where there has been high turnover.

Reply came that six additional positions have been added and the challenge to research growth in this regard was acknowledged and has been made difficult by those employees who chose not to return after the COVID crisis.

Representative of District 58 inquired as to what impact TTC has had on staff that have had their titles changed.

Reply came that some staff appreciated the changes and other did not, and that some have seen increases while others have remained steady. It was stated that the situation must be monitored to ensure fairness.

Representative of District 52 noted a decrease in 4 levels to 3 due to the TTC which directly affected animal caretakers and also noted a lack of premium pay for those who work on a Monday following a Sunday holiday. Representative of District 52 also expressed concern over workplace security, citing a recent incident in which an anti-research activist gained access through employment.

Reply came that raises, bonuses and luncheons have all been utilized to retention purposes. It was also noted that a rigorous process is in place to prevent access to those who wish to disrupt the workplace and that a website has been established to refute the claims of those opposed to research.

Representative of District 52 expressed concern that job stress levels are threatening the health of workers and also expressed concern that public relations supporting research are lacking.

Reply acknowledged the validity of such concerns.

Representative of District 7 expressed concern regarding turnover and understaffing which is creating overtime. Representative of District 7 asked what could be learned from the recent walkout of employees that took place in the State of Oregon.

Reply came that the overtime issue is one of concern, as are the lack of incoming applications for available positions.

Representative of District 58 noted the challenge presented by local private employers offering competitive salary and sign on bonuses.

Reply came that budgets are fixed by grants and cannot be changed to respond to market pressures that may be attractive to university staff.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Jenny Faust for the purpose of providing a report on the Policy Library.

Ms. Faust was joined by Megan Dzyuba for her presentation. The Congress was informed of the obsolete nature of long time HR policies and that policies are still working to catch up to legislative changes as well as that current policies are unclear, or not user friendly. The Office of Strategic Consulting was charged with building a policy library since policy was described as "being everywhere and nowhere". The operation fell under the Office of the Provost. OHR partnered with OSC and retired some irrelevant policies. In their report it was also noted that the university staff Personnel Policies Procedures and Communications Committee will be able to voice any concerns and that anything is revisable by the appropriate group. Currently a communication plan is being worked out that will include a website news feed.

Representative of District 52 inquired as to who conducts review of policies and at what point is shared governance engaged.

Reply came that policy analysts and writers don't own the policies, they work with the responsible office. It was also noted that monthly updates are provided to the Secretaries offices and transparency is a goal and input is welcome. It was reiterated that anything that should go to a committee of shared governance will go to a committee.

Representative of District 16 inquired about the status of disciplinary actions.

Reply came that there has been no recent changes to work rules and that Central OHR works with Colleges, Schools and Divisions to seek best practice when it comes to discipline.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Terry Fritter for the purpose of a report and to take feedback on behalf of the Central Committee.

Mr. Fritter thanked those Members of Congress who attended the American / Chinese Friendship Celebration event, and in addition thanked the Office of the Secretary for it's work in that regard. Mr. Fritter noted the upcoming deadline to submit nominations for the Elizabeth S. Pringle Award. Mr. Fritter encouraged Members of Congress to attend the upcoming meeting of the Central Committee at which Vice Chancellor Cramer will appear. Mr. Fritter informed those who could not attend that they could send written statements or questions.

Representative of District 17 inquired as to the status of the Congressional roster, having noticed that there are names either missing or still included that are no longer in campus employment.

Reply came from the Secretary that district rosters are frozen for the purpose of the election and then re-activated once the Districting and Representation Committee is seated, which has just taken place.

The Committee will confirm the necessary adjustments, and then the Office of the Secretary will begin to update the roster.

At 3:55PM, a motion was heard to adjourn, as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary