MINUTES
University Staff Congress
11.20.23

All Members were present with the following exceptions:

EXCUSED: R. Fisher (4), K. O’Neill (36), J. Duncan (40), A. Broan (64), R. Carson (84), K. Majerus (94), R. Gassen (95), R. Keegan (98), J. Bodnar (99),

ABSENT: D. Creasey (2), K. Nachtigall (18), L. Young (19), K. Stoebig (23), B. Weeden (54)

In addition, two Alternates were present.

At 2PM, Vice Chancellor Cramer called the meeting to order and announced that a quorum was present.

Vice Chancellor Cramer entertained a motion to approve the Minutes of the previous meeting. A motion was heard, as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice Chancellor Cramer paused for public comments. Mr. Guillermo Jiménez expressed concern regarding staffing levels and noted that he attended a session of Congress some months ago to express the same concern. Mr. Jiménez noted he observes construction of new buildings on campus but wonders why no funds are available to make wages more competitive.

Vice Chancellor Cramer asked the Congress for unanimous consent to take Agenda items out of order. No objection was heard.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Ms. Carla Vigue, Director of Tribal Relations, for the purpose of providing a greeting to the Congress. Ms. Vigue introduced herself, providing details of her personal and professional background, as well as information regarding the Native tribes of Wisconsin. Ms. Vigue detailed the priorities of her office, including supporting the needs of Native students on campus. Ms. Vigue noted that currently on display in front of Bascom Hall are banners celebrating the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Ms. Karen Demick, Chair of the Awards Selection Committee, for the purpose of introducing the 2023 winner of the Elizabeth S. Pringle Award. Ms. Demick introduced Ms. Cecilia Stodd, who made remarks of thanks in regard to the honor.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Ms. Lori Reesor, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, for the purpose of providing a report to Congress. Ms. Reesor provided an organizational chart of her office and described the resources and services it provides to students. Ms. Reesor highlighted the outreach to first generation college students that her office is conducting, as well as the creation of cultural centers.

Representative of District 51 sought clarity regarding the impact of the Supreme Court decision regarding Affirmative Action.

Reply came that the campus remains committed to maintaining a diverse student population while following the law.
Representative of District 51 inquired about the challenge to serving a student population that hold opposing views regarding current world events.

Reply came that it is important for students to find support with their own communities as well as to create dialogue and understanding while maintaining a strong commitment to free speech as a public institution.

Representative of District 82 sought clarity regarding the availability of mental health services and the possibility of the extension of its hours.

Reply came that while the services are limited to daytime hours, the goal is to increase coverage. It was noted that representatives of UW Health services have a successful partnership with UWPD when it comes to responding to calls related to mental health crises.

Representative of District 82 sought clarity regarding the submission of bias reports.

Reply came that reports are followed up on by the Dean’s office but that it is difficult to identify persons who may post offending material online. It was noted that if a crime is committed, it is reported to the UWPD.

Vice Chancellor Cramer provided a report to the Congress. Vice Chancellor Cramer began by noting the improvement in staffing levels over where they stood at this time last year, and noted that recruitment continues, including the offering of a referral bonus for FP&M employees. Vice Chancellor Cramer informed the Congress that he took part in a meeting of the Personnel Policies Procedures and Communications Committee where he discussed the status of ATP and ‘Workday’. Vice Chancellor Cramer noted that opportunities for employees to participate in campus events, both sporting and otherwise, will continue as a gesture of gratitude and appreciation. Vice Chancellor Cramer confirmed that once again, the day after Thanksgiving will be considered a parking amnesty day. Vice Chancellor Cramer informed the Congress that the Board of Regents voted to advance the requested $5 million needed to expand Computer Science programs.

Representative of District 39 inquired if a campus anniversary celebration will be scheduled for 2nd and 3rd Shift.

Reply confirmed such a celebration is planned.

Representative of District 65 stated that in July of this year, the new digital accessibility policy took effect, mandating that websites and digital content be made accessible. It was noted that the policy is being implemented largely as an unfunded mandate with much of the work being carried out by volunteers who notify content owners of accessibility problems and provide them with links to documentation on how to fix accessibility problems and how to create accessible digital content. Representative concluded that not all departments/divisions/units have liaisons and not all those creating digital content for websites see accessibility as part of their job duties. The latter is part of a culture that has viewed accessibility as someone else’s problem. We need a culture change that makes accessibility everyone’s responsibility.

Representative of District 38 noted that he will be retiring in December and thanked his co-workers, members of shared governance, and CLS for their support.
Representative of District 51 expressed his concern that $450,000 was spent to create a new logo for the UW-System, and sought clarity regarding the operating budget and the capital budget.

Reply came that the capital budget outlines specific building projects and the operating budget covers ongoing expense such as salaries and benefits.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Mr. Terry Fritter for the purpose of providing a report from the Central Committee and to accept suggestions for future Agenda items.

Mr. Fritter thanked the Vice Chancellor for providing the ticket opportunities and the holiday parking amnesty for University Staff. Mr. Fritter congratulated Cecilia Stodd on her award and noted her service in shared governance over the years. Mr. Fritter reminded the Congress that for the next three months, the Congress would meet via correspondence rather than in person, and requested that the Secretary release a briefing sheet in this regard. Mr. Fritter noted that Central Committee meetings during this same period would continue to be in person and that Members of Congress were welcome to attend or to send their suggestions for Agenda items to him or the Secretary via email.

At 3:50PM, a motion to adjourn was heard, as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary