MINUTES
University Staff Congress
4.15.24

All Members were present with the following exceptions:

EXCUSED: C. Lundey (13), S. Frey (39), J. Watson (66), DJ Payton (83), R. Carson (84), R. Gassen (95), A. Smalley (59)

ABSENT: D. Creasey (2), S. French (15), K. Nachtigall (18), C. Renk (32), D. Skuban (26), J. Moran (58), J. Gerrits (78), T. Stewart (79), R. Orzel (90)

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 to approve was heard, as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice Chancellor Cramer paused to accept public comments. A member of the trades advocated for a two-person insurance premium, instead of a ‘family’ and a ‘single’ and expressed his concern regarding what he considered to be stagnant wages.

Vice Chancellor Cramer provided a report to Congress in which he thanked those who had participated in the evening event honoring 2nd/3rd shift employees. Vice Chancellor Cramer informed the Congress that the new parental leave policy will go into effect on 1 July. Vice Chancellor Cramer noted that the Administrative Quality Satisfaction Survey is now open and will remain so until 30 April. Vice Chancellor Cramer informed the Congress that there will be a new Associate Vice Chancellor who will oversee ‘workday’. Vice Chancellor Cramer noted that there will be over 40 events associated with Earth Day, between 19 and 26 April.

Representative of District 60 sought clarification in regard to the start date of Parental Leave.

Confirmation was provided of the date of 1 July.

Representative of District 63 conveyed an inquiry of a constituent who asked if it would be possible to post video recordings of Congressional meetings.

Reply came that the question would be put to the Secretary.

Representative of District 48 expressed concern regarding the transparency of the procedures in use for the bonus program, stating that policies should be posted and accessible.

Reply came that in many instances email communications have been released to the staff in this regard, but further inquiries will be made of OHR for clarification.

Representative of District 68 sought clarification regarding staff transitions in regard to workday go live.

Reply came that the intention is for existing team to staff within the group and retain current employees.
Representative of District 41 expressed concern regarding the transparency surrounding the policy related to discretionary increases and bonuses, and expressed further concern that monies would be allocated simply to preferred employees rather than being earned by merit.

Assistant Vice Chancellor Ginny Routhe provided her own background and briefed the Congress on how organizational changes brought her position in Capital Project Delivery into being. AVC Routhe provided details to the Congress regarding the 248 capital projects, 117 of which are currently underway, including the new Engineering building and Computer Sciences building. AVC Routhe discussed building renovations and noted that 41% of buildings on campus are over 50 years old.

Representative of District 57 inquired where Vilas Hall may be on the list of priorities.

Reply came that while there are projects underway within Vilas Hall, the status of plans for the whole building is not known.

Representative of District 57 asked how building projects are prioritized.

Reply came that campus planning assembles the plans that drive the projects. A prioritization matrix is used to quantify a score for the projects from the requests that are put forward and a ranking list is put forward to the Chancellor.

Representative of District 57 inquired if the unfinished nature of the Vilas building was brought into consideration.

Reply came that this would have to be looked into before a reply could be provided.

Representative of District 7 inquired as to how employees who have concerns about building conditions can make their views known, particularly as it relates to childcare needs.

Reply came that those who wish to express opinions on projects can do so at community meetings regarding the campus master plan.

Representative of District 8 asked for clarification regarding a reference to the location building of Biology.

Reply came that it was meant to be History rather than Biology.

At this point in the proceedings the Congress stood informal for 15 minutes.

Upon return to the Agenda, April McHugh, member of the OHR Career Counseling Team, provided the Congress with her professional background and described the resources available through career counseling, noting that the program is confidential. The Congress was also informed that there wasn't a limit on the number of meetings a person can request for assistance, and they can be in person or virtual.

Representative of District 7 asked when a person might want to engage EAO instead of Career Counseling.

Reply came that while there is some overlap, EAO is engaged when the questions are related to specific workplace struggles rather than a desire to change the current position one is in.

Representative of District 51 stated that supervisors sometimes discourage movement and was concerned about confidentiality.
Reply came that the Career Counseling Team can assist with language that can be used to request meetings and that such meetings are confidential.

Representative of District 89 asked if online community of practice meetings are still being held and what the anticipated topics are.

Reply came that virtual community of practice meetings are conducted and include topics such as how to grow a campus career as well as job search process, interviewing, and addressing burnout.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized Mr. Terry Fritter, member of the Bylaws Committee, to provide a report on behalf of the Chair, who was unable to be present for the meeting.

Mr. Fritter reviewed the contents of the proposed Amendment to the Bylaws.

Vice Chancellor Cramer entertained a motion to approve the Amendment. A motion was heard, as was a second, to approve the Amendment. Vice Chancellor Cramer declared that the required two-thirds majority have voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice Chancellor Cramer recognized the Chair of the Central Committee, Mr. Terry Fritter, for the purpose of providing a report and accepting feedback.

Mr. Fritter thanked those Member of Congress who chose to run for another term and those Members who are leaving but recruited candidates to take their place.

Mr. Fritter also noted that he had attended the most recent Board of Regents meeting and noted that Members of the Board acknowledged that University Staff were underpaid. Mr. Fritter also requested that the Secretary forward the PowerPoint presentations used at this meeting to the Members of Congress.

Representative of District 57 suggested that a meeting takes place in order to discuss the Physical Plant work order system, stating that it is resulting in work being started without client’s knowledge of the scope or scale.

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

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary