

STAFF ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES
January 21, 2009

PRESENT

Denise Bard, Lisa Belanger, Valerie Bolden-Barrett, Beverly Carrier, Ellie Cherry, Judy Chestnut, Elaine Cooley, Barbara Dessureau, Nancy Dudek, Laurie Fasciano, Nancy Fields, Carla Fuller, Donna Galin, Lynn Galvin, Theresa Greger, Evelyne Haldimann, Ellen Levasseur, Sandi O'Donnell, Cindy Oppenheimer, Lisa Parker, Jason Pomposelli, Jennifer Sanborn, Terry Spencer, Bonny Stoecklin, Jillian Vollentine, Connie Yoczik

PRESIDENT REPORT

Jason Pomposelli opened the meeting at 1:04 p.m. The October SA minutes were accepted as submitted.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Lynn Galvin prepared the attached report summarizing the work of the Benefits Task Force. Subjects addressed include the "employee flexibility program" (a newly-designed program of paid time-off for both exempt and non-exempt employees), the employee assistance program, the tuition exchange program, and an upcoming benefits survey to allow employees to prioritize those benefits that have greatest meaning and value for them. There was greater interest in the flexibility program, in particular, and members were advised to look for town hall meetings in February and March to provide details of the program (scheduled to be implemented July 1, 2009). One particular recommendation of those in attendance was that "employee flexibility" be somehow more distinct in title from the current flex-time option available to staff.

The Wellness Committee is seeking to establish free or reduced-cost flu shots for employees on-campus. At present, many employees visit their physicians as the co-pay is less than the current \$25 flu shot cost on-campus.

There were no reports from the Budget Advisory Team or the Technology Policy Committee.

STAFF ASSOCIATION REPORTS

There are presently 173 members. There was not a budget update available at the time of the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

A previous suggestion to create a University-wide bike borrowing program has been integrated into the University's master planning process. VP for Student Affairs Lee Peters made a similar suggestion in the past, but learned through research that safety is a primary obstacle to such a program given the absence of bike paths and narrow road and walkways. Within the master plan, possible expansion of roads or inclusion of designated bike paths can be considered.

Jason Pomposelli has basketball tickets for the January 24th women's game. Special thanks to Athletics for providing these tickets at the group rate.

NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

Survey results: In December 2008 Staff Association members received a survey that requested insights about prioritizing the work of SA, possible restructuring of the leadership body of the association, and more. All in attendance received a high level summary of results (see attached), and discussed both the purpose of the survey and the potential meaning of the findings. Fifty-one responses were received; this represents less than a third of current association members, and only a tenth of all eligible employees. Responses are to be seen in this context.

It was noted that there seems to be a shift from the social purpose of the association as its greatest priority to ensuring the representation of staff for University-wide functions and staff advocacy as the highest value. While a majority did not speak in favor of dropping dues to represent all non-union staff, there were mixed reactions to a need for fundraising in the event of this change. Also significant was the perception that creating a two-president model with both exempt and non-exempt leaders was seen as more divisive than helpful. Comments submitted on questions inviting narrative responses presented inconsistent views. For example, for every five people who suggested a program be dropped or added, there were another five who stated the opposite opinion. The current executive committee feels the results are useful information for potential future leaders (e.g., the shift in focus/priority), but not a clear mandate for significant change at this time.

It was strongly suggested that non-members be separately surveyed so their voices will be represented in the information gathered about the association, and that the association continue to seek University recognition and financial sponsorship so that the question of "dues/no dues" is not a defining issue.

Job promotion and transfers on campus: Lisa Belanger and Denise Bard were present to answer members' questions about employment practices and their effects on current employees. The University has stated a preference for hiring and promoting current employees, but members question if this happens in practice. Those in attendance shared a number of personal examples of being overlooked for opportunities in favor of newcomers to the community.

HRD reps clarified our current advertising practice: If there is the potential of a departmental promotion, supervisors can post a paper job description "in unit" only. In addition, all jobs are listed on the webpage for five days before any advertisements can be sent to outside media. All jobs are posted on the webpage on Friday. In addition, the jobs board outside Gengras Cafeteria still exists. It was noted that there is not an internal website that differs from the site available to all visitors to the University, and thus there is very little time advantage to being a current employee.

Members also shared that they rarely receive notification that a job has been filled. While HRD asks all hiring supervisors to contact internal candidates directly with feedback, it was apparent that this is infrequent in practice. Lisa and Denise made note of this, and will work to improve this process.

In addition, both representatives from HRD felt that a valuable conversation should take place about whether or not we truly give "privilege" to internal candidates, and what form this takes in practice. They will consider where best to initiate this conversation, and will keep Staff Association members informed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Two upcoming basketball games are significant charity benefits. Laurie Fasciano provided posters to anyone willing to advertise the games in their offices and the community.

Next meeting will be February 11, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. in the Simsbury Suite, Gengras Student Union.

Jennifer Sanborn
Corresponding Secretary

BTF Report to Staff Association
January 21, 2009

Employee Flexibility Program

The BTF submitted an Employee Flexibility Program to the administration and it has been approved for implementation July 1, 2009. Presentations have been made to the Council of Deans, and the Executive Board of the Staff Association. Details on Town Hall Meetings, Supervisor Training, and individual sessions are being worked out and will be communicated during the months of February and March.

Employee Assistance Program

BTF members discussed how best to encourage employees and family members who reside in the home of the employee to utilize this program. Statistics show us that most referrals are a result of HRD communication. Statistics also show us that the University has a higher usage than most other institutions. We welcome your feed back on this program and how we can better communicate its value to the University community. We also discussed having EAP return to campus for some brown bag workshops on various topics.

Tuition Exchange Program

It was brought to the attention of the BTF that there is some confusion surrounding the language and/or guidelines of this program. Members of the BTF will be working with the Office of Admissions and Student Financial Aid to clarify the language and associated rules that govern this program.

Benefits Survey

The BTF is in the process of developing a benefits survey to be distributed to the University community at some point in the future.

Staff Association Survey

1. How would you rank the current priorities for the association?

	Highest Priority	Above Average Priority	Average Priority	Below Average Priority	Least Important Priority	Rating Average	Response Count
SOCIAL (e.g., staff connectivity via meetings, BBQ, Turkey Luncheon, off-campus outings, etc.)	15.7% (8)	39.2% (20)	37.3% (19)	3.9% (2)	3.9% (2)	2.41	51
COMMUNITY OUTREACH (e.g., Hartford Scholarship, Food/Underwear Drive, Community Day, Special Olympics, etc.)	15.7% (8)	45.1% (23)	31.4% (16)	7.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	2.31	51
STAFF ADVOCACY (e.g., recommending University policy changes, improving work conditions, etc.)	72.5% (37)	15.7% (8)	5.9% (3)	3.9% (2)	2.0% (1)	1.47	51
STAFF REPRESENTATION FOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE INITIATIVES (e.g., Strategic Planning Committee, Budget Advisory Team Committee, Benefits Task Force Committee, etc.)	68.6% (35)	21.6% (11)	5.9% (3)	3.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.45	51
STAFF RECOGNITION (e.g., annual Outstanding Staff Member Awards, etc.)	25.5% (13)	41.2% (21)	25.5% (13)	3.9% (2)	3.9% (2)	2.20	51
GRIEVANCE ASSISTANCE FOR MEMBERS	41.2% (21)	27.5% (14)	15.7% (8)	9.8% (5)	5.9% (3)	2.12	51
answered question							51
skipped question							0

2. What ONE specific priority do you think the association should add?

	Response Count
	51
answered question	51
skipped question	0

3. What ONE specific priority do you think the association should discontinue?

Response
Count

51

answered question 51

skipped question 0

4. What one specific activity would you want to see the association add?

Response
Count

51

answered question 51

skipped question 0

5. What ONE specific activity would you want to see the association discontinue?

Response
Count

51

answered question 51

skipped question 0

6. Any comments?




Response
Count

30

answered question 30

skipped question 21

7. Should the association eliminate dues and represent ALL non-union staff?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes		27.5%	14	
NO		56.9%	29	
Unsure		15.7%	8	
			answered question	51
			skipped question	0

8. If dues were eliminated, do you think this would have a negative impact on the turnout for social events?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes		37.3%	19	
No		37.3%	19	
Unsure		25.5%	13	
			answered question	51
			skipped question	0

9. If dues were eliminated, would you serve on a Staff Association Fund Raising Committee?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes		15.7%	8	
No		52.9%	27	
Unsure		31.4%	16	
			answered question	51
			skipped question	0

10. If dues were eliminated, would you donate towards fund raising?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes		62.7%	32	
No		13.7%	7	
Unsure		23.5%	12	
			answered question	51
			skipped question	0

11. Would you be in favor of having two Staff Association Presidents (one exempt, one non-exempt)?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes		33.3%	17	
No		52.9%	27	
Unsure		13.7%	7	
			answered question	51
			skipped question	0

12. Why or why not?

	Response Count
	42
answered question	42
skipped question	9