

University of Hartford Staff Association

Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2009

PRESENT

Bonnie Barsi, Amy Brown, Jill Burnham, Bonnie Cameron, Bev Carrier, Elinor Cherry, Judy Chestnut, Barbara Dessureau, Laurie Fasciano, Carla Fuller, Lynn Galvin, Valerie Gilleran, Therese Greger, Evelyne Haldimann, Cheryl Hoffert, Diana Horn, Arosha Jayawickrema, Ellen Lefvasseur, Jim Mello, Irwin Nussbaum, Sandi O'Donnell, Lisa Parker, Jason Pomposelli, Jennifer Sanborn, Karen Schermerhorn, Barbara Schwartz, Sharon Scorso, Diana Simonds, Terry Spencer, Bonny Stoecklin, Jillian Vollandine, Linda Zigmont, Dawn Zumbroski

PRESIDENT REPORT

Jason Pomposelli opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. The March SA minutes were accepted with one minor change—Donna Galin was incorrectly listed as Donna Galvin.

STAFF ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE REPORTS

BENEFITS TASK FORCE – There will be another Town Meeting on the Flexible Benefits changes on April 17 from 10:00 to 11:30 in Wilde Auditorium.

BAT – The committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow.

WELLNESS – A Wellness Fair will be held on April 29, 2009, in Konover from 11:00 to 2:00. All are welcome—there will be vendors and prizes.

MEMBERSHIP – Currently 173 members. Bonny Stoecklin thanked all the Building Reps. who assisted her in her position as Membership Director for the past four years. (The membership count was 115 when Bonny started.)

TREASURER – Balance \$2302. (IDT for Thanksgiving luncheon is still outstanding.)

As this was the **Annual Meeting**, Jason gave an overview of Staff Association events during the past year:

- The Barbecue in August increased membership by about 20 to 30 members.
- The Thanksgiving luncheon at 1877 Restaurant was well attended.
- Items were collected for both Project Horizon and Food Share. The Staff Association increased their food collection by 50% to a total of 300 pounds this year.
- Staff Association enjoyed two HAWK basketball games over the past winter.
- Jason reported that Arosha Jayawickrema and Andy Buonano had attended an earlier Executive Board meeting to ask for input from the Staff Association regarding the new changes in employee benefits.
- The new and old Executive Board members met with each other last week in order to give the former members the opportunity to transfer notebooks, tips, and suggestions to the succeeding members. This marks the first time the transfer to new officers has been handled this way.

--The Hartford Scholars Program scholarship was awarded to John Szpyt. The Staff Association gives this award each year to a Hartford area student who has financial need and is also in good academic standing.

OLD BUSINESS

Jason met with John Michalewicz to discuss campus snow removal. John is going to indicate on a map the main entrances for buildings and primary walkways on campus. These areas will receive first attention when there has been a snowfall. John will communicate this information to the community. The Facilities Department has also offered custodial staff the opportunities to help with snow removal as needed. It was debated whether or not John was sincere in his request for additional "volunteers" to shovel sidewalks.

The Wellness Committee, along with the Human Resources Department, is pursuing the possibility of United HealthCare offering flu shots on campus on a designated day(s).

Jason officially inducted the new SA President by handing Jim Mello the Presidential flashdrive. Jim thanked everyone and encouraged future participation.

SPEAKER

Arosha Jayawickrema, Vice President of Finance and Administration for the University, generously shared valuable information regarding the University's current financial status and what we may expect for the future.

To summarize Arosha's statements:

The education industry is facing unprecedented challenges caused by demographic changes and the deteriorating economy.

The University of Hartford is in a relatively positive position. The University began contingency planning 12 years ago by instituting a conservative budget philosophy. By keeping better control of compensation and the infrastructure, and by paying down debts, the University anticipates ending the 2009 Fiscal Year with a \$2 million surplus, which would provide approximately a \$10 million rainy day fund. The University has also focused on improving Admissions issues recently by soliciting many more applications from prospective students, and by becoming more selective about the acceptance process.

Now, the University is aggressively seeking acceptance deposits from new students while watching the early registration rate and housing assignments from current students. Tuition discounts are being given where possible in order to attract students who may be turned away because of financial need. The critical deadline date for colleges nation-wide to receive students' deposits is May 1.

Phase I plans to keep the University's financial position strong concentrate on President Harrison's strong desire to avoid lay-offs:

- A break-even budget is being developed.
- The financial aid discount rate has been increased.
- Compensation increases were possible this fiscal year.

- There will be a 10% hold-back of all non-salary lines. If there is adequate enrollment, some or all of the money will be given back to the departments.
- There is a 6-week minimum wait period to fill vacant positions. (Unused vacation time would also be added to the wait period.)

Phases II, III, and IV will be implemented only if necessary in response to further deficits or student enrollment shortfalls.

Phase II:

- Classes may be cut so fewer Adjunct salaries would be paid out.
- Operational savings would be considered—close a dorm? cut down University events?
renegotiate contracts with vendors?
- Faculty and Staff stipends would be examined.
- Council of Deans would want to review faculty teaching loads and necessity of offering all courses.

Phase III:

More difficult, short-term decisions would have to be made such as choosing one maintenance project over another, not filling staff positions as they are vacated, and managing facilities' overtime.

Arosha appealed to all of us to look for ways to cut back our expenses and to provide even better and more attentive customer service in all areas. Any cost-saving suggestions can be emailed to Arosha at jaya@hartford.edu. Arosha will follow up with Jim Mello regarding the results of the May 1 deadline date so that Jim can share that information at a future SA meeting.

Arosha concluded with outline of 3 campus projects currently in process:

1. Alumni House employees will move to the Handel Center.
2. Gengras food service areas will be renovated. ARAMARK does not yet know if and how summer hours will be revised.
3. Shaw Center additions will be added to Hillyer but only when funds are collected.

MASTER PLANNING MEETING

A meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 13, 10:00 am in the Computer Learning Center. Please email Evelyne Haldimann, haldimann@hartford.edu, if you would like to represent the SA.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m. The next meeting will be May 13, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. in the Gengras Student Union Room 333 (Avon Room).

Judy Chestnut
Recording Secretary