

UNIVERSITY *of* HARTFORD STAFF ASSOCIATION

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2009

PRESENT

Bonny Barsi, Valerie Bolden-Barrett, Judy Chestnut, Nancy Clubb, Carol Courtney, Barbara Dessureau, Nancy Fields, Donna Galin, Lynn Galvin, Evelyne Haldimann, Liz Inkel, Sue Landolina, Ellen Levasseur, Jim Mello, Sandi O'Donnell, Lisa Parker, Jason Pomposelli, Karen Schermerhorn, Sharon Scorso, Bonny Stoecklin, Jillian Vollentine, Connie Yoczik

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jim Mello opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. The May 13, 2009 SA minutes were accepted.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

BENEFITS TASK FORCE – No new information to report.

BUDGET ADVISORY TEAM – At the last meeting, the committee reviewed Arosha Jayawickrema's previous presentation on the University's economic outlook and the new Retirement Plan.

WELLNESS – The new Hawk Walk has begun and 9 teams have already been organized.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE – The committee appears to be dormant right now.

STAFF ASSOCIATION REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP – No new information to report.

TREASURER – The SA account has a balance of \$1,310.

OLD BUSINESS

As a result of three separate unanimous votes, the title of the Staff Association leader has been changed from "President" to "Chair", the title of "Vice President" is now "Vice Chair" and the title "Building Representative" has been changed to "Community Representative."

Questions were raised and answered regarding the motion on the addition of two "Members-At-Large" positions to the Executive Board:

- Would these new members be able to vote? Yes
- Would they have responsibilities? No (This was intentional.)
- Wouldn't this further divide the exempt vs. non-exempt employees? Hopefully, employees of both categories would be more strongly represented.
- Would these members be appointed or voted into the E-board? The first year, they will be chosen by the board since this EBoard introduced the idea, but in subsequent years they would be elected along with all other EBoard representatives.
- Would this make the SA EBoard too large and ineffective? Hopefully not. The intent is to add dimension and perspective to the EBoard.
- Would there be a job description for these 2 new positions? Yes, that could be included in the work to be done by the Action Team responsible for revising the By-Laws and Constitution.

A vote was held on the motion to add the positions of "Exempt Staff Member-at-Large" and "Non-Exempt Members-at-Large." 19 votes were cast; 14 in favor; 5 opposed; 2 abstained.

(Recording Secretary's note: Although a majority of the votes cast supported the motion, the motion was not approved because it failed to meet the 2/3 majority required by the SA Constitution. Twenty-two members were present at the meeting at the time of the vote. A 2/3 majority would have required 15 votes in favor for passage of the motion. At the time of the vote, the attendance at the meeting was calculated at a total of 21 members. This total was inaccurate as it did not include the accounting of the Recording Secretary herself. The motion was announced incorrectly as "passed" at the meeting. By virtue of this note and the electronic distribution of these meeting minutes, notice is hereby given to the membership that the motion to add the positions of "Exempt Staff Member-at-Large" and "Non-Exempt Members-at-Large" to the Staff Association Executive Board will be placed on the July 8, 2009 meeting agenda and will be re-considered at that time.)

NEW BUSINESS

Action Team sign-up sheets were circulated to determine which members present are interested in getting involved in the Action Teams that have been identified so far:

- Awards and Recognitions (two additional sign-ups)
- Staff Advocacy Program (two additional sign-ups)
- Review of the SA Constitution and By-Laws (two additional sign-ups)
- Membership Structure (no additional sign-ups)
- Social Events (no additional sign-ups)

Sharon Scorso and Jason Pomposelli shared information their action team gathered regarding possible dates and places for the Staff Association Barbecue. After discussion of several important events leading up to the Fall semester, it was agreed that the best date for the Barbecue would be August 19, 2009. After discussion of various campus locations, it was agreed that the best place to hold the Barbecue is the picnic area in front of Konover. There are several picnic tables, but members are encouraged to bring their own chairs, blankets, and tablecloths for comfort and space. The next step will be to figure out the most efficient purchase of food for the event.

The Staff Association meeting times for July 2009 – June 2010 will be as follows; On the odd-numbered months, meetings will start at 1:00pm. On even-numbered months, meetings will start at 12 noon. Meeting will continue to take place on the second Wednesday of each month.

DISCUSSION

The meeting concluded with a discussion related to the charging of membership dues in 2009-2010. The question was raised if the SA should be charging dues at all or at what level dues should be set. Discussion included questions such as:

- Going forward, what do the members of the Staff Association want the SA to accomplish?
- Are we a social committee or a Staff Advocacy group? Many members made it clear their reasons for joining the SA was for the purpose of staff advocacy. The current wording in the Constitution states "The object of the organization shall be to represent the rights, needs, interests, and goodwill of the staff at the University of Hartford, excepting those staff members of bargaining units whose unions are certified to represent employees of the University of Hartford."
- What do members actually 'get' in return for our \$10 dues payment? Why do we have dues? Generally, an employee can become a member if only to enjoy the annual barbecue,

a small discount on a Thanksgiving luncheon, and the right to vote on SA issues. Some members stated that they would be very disappointed if such “perks” were eliminated.

- Would the organization need money if it were principally an advocacy council?
- Do we really want to restrict representation of staff employees and their issues to only those employees that have joined the SA (paid the dues?) Is it our right to turn people away from the barbecue because they are not dues-paying members?
- The recent survey results indicated that members would rather donate money than fundraise.
- Former Executive Board members stressed that they had tried to advocate for the entire staff in the past. They made great strides in getting the SA recognized by other organizations on campus, but they voice a concern that the University is notorious for being slow to change. Fund raising has not been successful in past years.
- Can we take another look at the results of the recent survey?

Chair Jim Mello thanked those present for their thoughtful input and contribution to the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m. The next meeting will be July 8, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at a site to be announced at a later date.

Judy Chestnut
Recording Secretary